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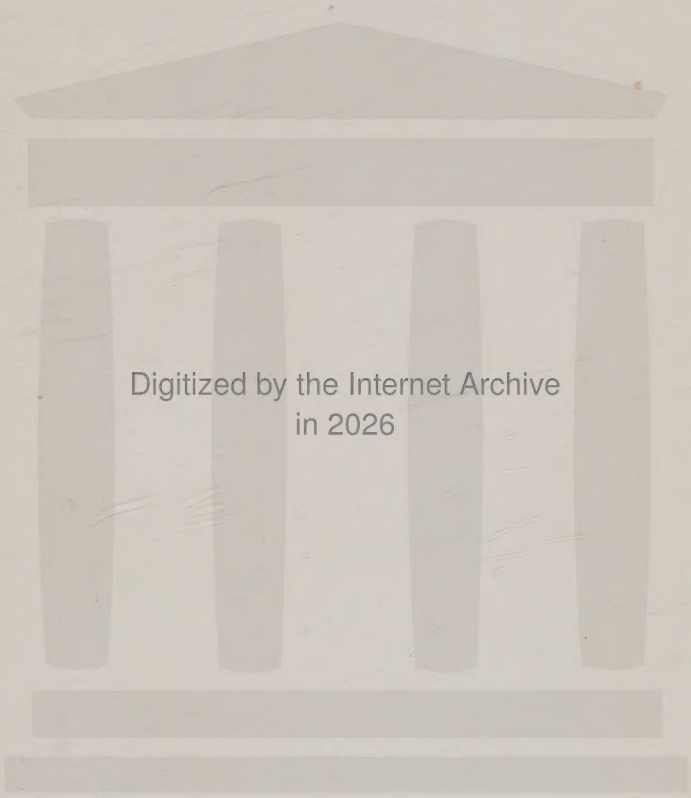
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THE CHRIST

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TARBELL'S

TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE
FOR 1925

TWENTIETH ANNUAL VOLUME

MARTHA TARBELL, Ph. D.

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LESSONS FOR 1925

FIRST QUARTER

JANUARY—MARCH

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(Third Quarter of a Nine Months' Course)

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(First Quarter of a Nine Months' Course)

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THIRD QUARTER

JULY—SEPTEMBER

The Spread of Christianity

(Second Quarter of a Nine Months' Course)

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OCTOBER—DECEMBER

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(Third Quarter of a Nine Months' Course)

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HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

SELECTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL COMMITTEE

FIRST QUARTER

I. Dec. 29. Lk. 19.29-40. CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.
Dec. 30. Ps. 24.1-10. THE KING OF GLORY.
Dec. 31. Mt. 18.1-6. CHILDREN OF THE KING.
Jan. 1. Mt. 21.12-17. THE CHILDREN'S PRAISE.
Jan. 2. Zech. 9.9-13. THE PROPHECY.
Jan. 3. Rev. 21.1-7. THE NEW CITY.
Jan. 4. Ps. 118.21-29. IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.

II. Jan 5. Mt. 25.31-46. THE LAST JUDGMENT.
Jan. 6. Rom. 2.6-16. THE BASIS OF DIVINE JUDGMENT.
Jan. 7. Jn. 5.21-29. JUDGMENT BY THE SON.
Jan. 8. Acts 17.24-31. THE CERTAINTY OF JUDGMENT.
Jan. 9. 2 Cor. 5.5-10. AWAITING THE JUDGMENT WITH COURAGE.
Jan. 10. Jude 11-22. EXAMPLES OF JUDGMENT.
Jan. 11. Eccl. 12.1-8, 13, 14. THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.

III. Jan. 12. Lk. 22.14-23. THE LORD'S SUPPER.
Jan. 13. Ex. 12.21-28. THE FIRST PASSOVER.
Jan. 14. Jn. 6.30-35. THE TRUE BREAD.
Jan. 15. Jn. 6.48-58. THE BREAD OF LIFE.
Jan. 16. 1 Cor. 11.23-29. THE SANCTITY OF THE LORD'S TABLE.
Jan. 17. Rev. 7.13-17. A PURIFIED PEOPLE.
Jan. 18. Ps. 22.22-28. THE SATISFYING PORTION.

IV. Jan. 19. Jn. 14.1-17. JESUS COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES.
Jan. 20. Mt. 11.25-30. COMFORT FOR THE NEEDY.
Jan. 21. Jn. 11.18-26. COMFORT FOR THE SORROWING.
Jan. 22. Acts 27.21-25. COMFORT IN TROUBLE.
Jan. 23. 2 Cor. 7.2-7. A COMFORTING BROTHER.
Jan. 24. 2 Cor. 1.1-7. THE GOD OF COMFORT.
Jan. 25. Ps. 20.1-9. COMFORTED THROUGH SALVATION.

V. Jan. 26. Jn. 15.1-11. THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES.
Jan. 27. Mt. 7.15-20. KNOWN BY OUR FRUIT.
Jan. 28. 1 Jn. 2.1-11. ABIDING BY LOVE.
Jan. 29. 1 Jn. 3.13-24. ABIDING AND ASKING.
Jan. 30. Rom. 8.24-28. THE GREAT HELPER.
Jan. 31. Gal. 5.22-26. FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.
Feb. 1. Ps. 119.9-16. PURITY THROUGH THE WORD.

VI. Feb. 2. Jn. 17-1-13. CHRIST'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER.
Feb. 3. Gen. 18.23-33. INTERCESSION OF ABRAHAM.
Feb. 4. Ex. 32.30-34. INTERCESSION OF MOSES.
Feb. 5. 1 Sam. 12.19-25. INTERCESSION OF SAMUEL.
Feb. 6. 2 Chron. 14.9-12. INTERCESSION OF ASA.
Feb. 7. Acts 12.1-11. INTERCESSION OF THE CHURCH.
Feb. 8. Eph. 3.14-21. INTERCESSION OF PAUL.

VII. Feb. 9. Mk. 14.32-42. JESUS IN GETHSEMANE.
Feb. 10. Lk. 22.39-46. AGONIZING PRAYER.
Feb. 11. Mt. 26.36-46. THY WILL BE DONE.
Feb. 12. Heb. 5.1-10. THE SUFFERING HIGH PRIEST.
Feb. 13. Heb. 2.8-18. THE SYMPATHETIC HIGH PRIEST.
Feb. 14. Phil. 3.7-12. SHARING HIS SUFFERINGS.
Feb. 15. Ps. 22.1-8. THE SUFFERING SAVIOR.

VIII. Feb. 16. Rom. 13.1-14. GOOD CITIZENSHIP.
Feb. 17. Rom. 14.13-23. THE HIGHEST GOOD.
Feb. 18. Titus 3.1-11. LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS.
Feb. 19. Act 21.37-40. PAUL'S CITIZENSHIP.
Feb. 20. Ps. 15. A CITIZEN OF ZION.
Feb. 21. Eph. 5.6-21. WALKING WISELY.
Feb. 22. Ps. 72.1-8. RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS.

IX. Feb. 23. Mt. 27.11-26. CHRIST BEFORE PILATE.
Feb. 24. Jn. 18.19-24. CHRIST BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST.
Feb. 25. Lk. 23.6-12. CHRIST BEFORE HEROD.
Feb. 26. Lk. 23.13-25. A VACILLATING JUDGE.
Feb. 27. Mk. 15.12-20. CONDEMNED TO BE CRUCIFIED.
Feb. 28. Jn. 19.1-11. BEHOLD THE MAN.
Mar. 1. Isa. 53.1-6. DESPISED AND REJECTED.

X. Mar. 2. Lk. 23.33-46. THE SAVIOR ON THE CROSS.
Mar. 3. Mt. 16.21-28. CHRIST'S DEATH NECESSARY.
Mar. 4. Rom. 5.1-11. CHRIST'S DEATH AN ATONEMENT FOR SIN.
Mar. 5. Jn. 10.7-18. CHRIST'S DEATH VOLUNTARY.

Mar. 6. Heb. 9.11-15. Christ's Death a Sinless Offering.
Mar. 7. 1 Cor. 11.23-34. Christ's Death Commemorated.
Mar. 8. Ps. 22.11-19. Christ's Death Portrayed.
XI. Mar. 9. Jn. 20.1-16 Our Lord's Resurrection.
Mar. 10. Lk. 24.1-9. The Empty Sepulcher.
Mar. 11. Mt. 28.1-10. The Risen Lord.
Mar. 12. Jn. 20.19-29. Jesus Appears to His Disciples.
Mar. 13. 1 Cor. 15.1-11. The Scriptures Fulfilled.
Mar. 14. 1 Cor. 15.12-20. Christ's Resurrection Our Hope.
Mar. 15. Ps. 16.5-11. The Certain Victory.
XII. Mar. 16. Lk. 24.36-44. After Forty Days.
Mar. 17. Lk. 24.45-53. The Commission and the Ascension.
Mar. 18. Rev. 1.1-8. Alpha and Omega.
Mar. 19. Rev. 1.9-20. The Message of the Ascended Christ.
Mar. 20. Col. 1.9-20. Lord Over All.
Mar. 21. Heb. 7.14-25. The Everliving Christ.
Mar. 22. Ps. 24.1-10. The Triumphant King.
XIII. Mar. 23. Jn. 17.1-13. Christ's Intercessory Prayer.
Mar. 24. Mk. 14.32-42. Jesus in Gethsemane.
Mar. 25. Mt. 27.11-26. Christ Before Pilate.
Mar. 26. Lk. 23.33-46. The Saviour on the Cross.
Mar. 27. Jn. 20.1-16. Our Lord's Resurrection.
Mar. 28. Lk. 24.45-53. The Commission and Ascension.
Mar. 29. Rev. 1.9-18. The Message of the Reigning Christ.

SECOND QUARTER

I. Mar. 30. Acts 1.1-11. The Master's Instructions.
Mar. 31. Acts 1.12-14. Waiting for the Holy Spirit.
Apr. 1. Acts 2.1-13. The Coming of the Holy Spirit.
Apr. 2. Acts 2.36-47. The Blessing of Pentecost.
Apr. 3. Mt. 3.13-17. The Holy Spirit Coming to Jesus.
Apr. 4. Mic. 4.1-5. The Glory of the Church.
Apr. 5. Joel 2.28-32. The Prophetic Promise.
II. Apr. 6. Acts 3.1-11. The Cripple at the Beautiful Gate.
Apr. 7. Lk. 4.16-21. The Mission of the Master.
Apr. 8. Lk. 13.10-17. Healing a Crippled Woman.
Apr. 9. Jn. 11.32-44. Recalling a Friend to Life.
Apr. 10. Dt. 11.1-12. The Design of Miracles.
Apr. 11. Mk. 16.14-20. In the Name of Jesus.
Apr. 12. Isa. 35.1-10. The Blessings of the Gospel.
III. Apr. 13. Acts 4.1-12. Peter and John Imprisoned.
Apr. 14. Acts 4.13-22. Peter and John Threatened.
Apr. 15. Acts 4.23-31. The Church at Prayer.
Apr. 16. Acts 4.32-37. A Common Purse.
Apr. 17. Acts 5.1-11. Lying Punished.
Apr. 18. Rom. 15.1-7. The Christian Spirit.
Apr. 19. Ps. 133. Brotherly Love.
IV. Apr. 20. Acts 6.1-7. Stephen Chosen Deacon.
Apr. 21. Acts 6.8-15. Stephen Before the Council.
Apr. 22. Acts 7.57-60. The Martyrdom of Stephen.
Apr. 23. Heb. 11.32-40. Heroes of the Faith.
Apr. 24. Gen. 4.3-8. The First Martyr.
Apr. 25. Rev. 7.13-17. The Glory of the Martyr.
Apr. 26. Ps. 27. Jehovah Our Strength.
V. Apr. 27. Dan. 1.8-17. The Benefits of Total Abstinence.
Apr. 28. Ps. 10.1-12. The Cunning Enemy.
Apr. 29. Prov. 23.29-35. The Way of the Drunkard.
Apr. 30. Isa. 5.11-23. A Growing Evil.
May 1. Jer. 35.5-10, 14. Total Abstainers.
May 2. 1 Cor. 8.1-13. Abstaining for Others.
May 3. Ps. 65.9-13. God's Gracious Gifts.
VI. May 4. Acts 8.4-13. Philip in Samaria.
May 5. Acts 8.26-39. Philip and the Ethiopian Treasurer.
May 6. Ps. 119.9-16. The Cleansing Word.
May 7. Ps. 119.105-112. The Illuminating Word.
May 8. Ps. 119.97-104. The Love Inspiring Word.
May 9. Isa. 55.1-5. The Invitation.
May 10. Isa. 53.7-12. The Suffering Savior.
VII. May 11. Acts 8.1-3; 9.1, 2. Saul the Persecutor.
May 12. Acts 9.3-18. Saul Becomes a Christian.
May 13. Acts 26.12-20. The Story as Told to Agrippa.
May 14. Jn. 3.1-8. Jesus and Nicodemus.
May 15. Lk. 19.1-10. The Conversion of Zacchæus.
May 16. 1 Jn. 5.1-12. Salvation Through Faith.
May 17. Ps. 32.1-7. Confession and Forgiveness.
VIII. May 18. Acts 26.4-11. The Early Life of Saul.
May 19. Acts 9.20-31. Saul Begins His Great Career.
May 20. Acts 13.44-52. A Scene from the First Missionary Journey.

May 21. Acts 16.1-10. A Scene from the Second Missionary Journey.
May 22. Acts 19.1-10. A Scene from the Third Missionary Journey.
May 23. Rom. 1.8-17. The Missionary Spirit.
May 24. Josh. 1.1-9. Strong Through Faith.
IX. May 25. Acts 8.14-24. Peter in Samaria.
May 26. Acts 9.32-35. Peter in Lydda.
May 27. Acts 9.36-43. Peter in Joppa.
May 28. 1 K. 18.30-39. An Old Testament Miracle.
May 29. Mk. 2.29-34. The Miracle Worker at Work.
May 30. Jn. 20.24-31. The Reason for Miracles.
May 31. Isa. 55.1-7. Mercy Offered to All.
X. June 1. Acts 10.1-8. The Vision of Cornelius.
June 2. Acts 10.9-16. The Vision of Peter.
June 3. Acts 10.17-23. Cornelius Sends for Peter.
June 4. Acts 10.34-43. Opening the Door to the Gentiles.
June 5. Acts 10.44-48. The Holy Spirit Given.
June 6. Acts 11.1-18. Peter's Explanation.
June 7. Isa. 61.1-9. The Glorious Prophecy.
XI. June 8. Acts 11.19-26. The Church in Antioch.
June 9. Acts 11.27-30. A Ministering Church.
June 10. Acts 13.1-3. A Missionary Church.
June 11. Acts. 15.22-29. The Message from Jerusalem.
June 12. Ps. 133. Harmony in the Church.
June 13. Ps. 122. Joy in the Church.
June 14. Isa. 12. A Song of Thanksgiving.
XII. June 15. Acts 12.1-5. Peter Imprisoned.
June 16. Acts 12.6-10. Peter Delivered.
June 17. Acts 12.11-19. An Amazed Church.
June 18. 1 Pet. 3.13-22. Suffering for Righteousness' Sake.
June 19. Ps. 46. God the Strength of His People.
June 20. Ps. 34.1-8. The Guardian Angel.
June 21. Ps. 91.1-12. Security in Jehovah.
XIII. June 22. Acts 2.36-47. The Blessing of Pentecost.
June 23. Acts 3.1-11. The Cripple at the Beautiful Gate.
June 24. Acts 7.54-60. Stephen the First Martyr.
June 25. Acts 8.26-39. Philip and the Ethiopian.
June 26. Acts 9.1-19. Saul's Conversion.
June 27. Acts 11.5-18. Peter's Vision.
June 28. Ps. 98. Praising Jehovah.

THIRD QUARTER

I. June 29. Acts 13.1-12. The Beginning of Foreign Missions.
June 30. Mt. 28.16-20. The Great Commission.
July 1. Jon. 1.1-10. An Unwilling Missionary.
July 2. Rom. 1.8-17. The World Need.
July 3. Isa. 42.10-13. God's Praises in the Isles.
July 4. Isa. 11.1-9. The Triumph of Missions.
July 5. Isa. 55.1-7. Mercy Offered to All.
II. July 6. Acts. 13.16-25. Paul's Message at Antioch.
July 7. Acts 13.26-39. Paul's Message at Antioch.
July 8. Acts 13.42-52. The Double Effect.
July 9. Mal. 4.1-6. The Message of Malachi.
July 10. Jon. 3.5-10. The Ninevites Repent.
July 11. Rev. 22.17-20. The Gospel for All.
July 12. Isa. 9.1-7. Joy in Galilee.
III. July 13. Acts 14.1-7. The Gospel in Iconium.
July 14. Acts 14.8-18. The Gospel in Lystra.
July 15. Acts 14.19-28. Triumphing Over Tribulation.
July 16. Dan. 6.10-18. A Persecuted Prophet.
July 17. 2 Tim. 3.10-17. Persecution Predicted.
July 18. 2 Cor. 1.3-11. God Our Deliverer.
July 19. Ps. 46.1-7. Our Help in Trouble.
IV. July 20. Acts 15.1-6. The Dissension.
July 21. Acts 15.7-12. Peter's Judgment.
July 22. Acts 15.13-21. James's Judgment.
July 23. Acts 15.22-31. The Letter to Antioch.
July 24. Eph. 2.1-10. Saved by Grace.
July 25. Rom. 5.12-21. Abounding Grace.
July 26. Rom. 5.1-9. Justified by Faith.
V. July 27. Jas. 1.12-18. Temptation.
July 28. Jas. 1.19-27. Pure Religion.
July 29. Jas. 2.14-26. Doers of the Word.
July 30. Jas. 3.1-12. Careful Speech.
July 31. Jas. 4.1-10. Humble Living.
Aug. 1. Jas. 5.7-11. Patience.
Aug. 2. Jas. 5.13-18. The Power of Prayer.
VI. Aug. 3. Acts 15.36; 16.5. Beginning the Second Missionary Tour.
Aug. 4. 2 K. 17.24-28. A Mission in Samaria.
Aug. 5. 2 Chron. 35.1-6. Josiah Encouraging the Priests.
Aug. 6. Lk. 22.24-34. Peter Strengthening the Brethren.

Aug. 7. 1 Tim. 4.6-16. Paul Encouraging Timothy.
Aug. 8. Ps. 96. The Missionary Song.
Aug. 9. Ps. 67.1-7. Salvation for All.
VII. Aug. 10. Gal. 5.13-26. Walking by the Spirit.
Aug. 11. Eph. 5.15-21. Drunkenness Forbidden.
Aug. 12. Isa. 28.1-6. Drunkenness Condemned.
Aug. 13. Eccl. 11.9; 12.8. The Strength and Duty of Youth.
Aug. 14. Rom. 13.11-14. Walking in the Light.
Aug. 15. Eph. 2.1-9. Saved by Grace.
Aug. 16. Prov. 23.29-35. The Folly of Intemperance.
VIII. Aug. 17. Acts 16.6-15. The Macedonian Call.
Aug. 18. 1 Cor. 16.1-8. An Open Door.
Aug. 19. Gen. 12.1-9. Abram's Call.
Aug. 20. Jonah 3.1-4. Jonah's Call.
Aug. 21. Jn. 1.43-51. Philip's Call.
Aug. 22. Mt. 28.16-20. The Great Commission.
Aug. 23. Isa. 6.1-8. Isaiah's Call.
IX. Aug. 24. Acts 16.16-24. Personal Gain versus Public Good.
Aug. 25. Acts 16.25-34. The Jailer Converted.
Aug. 26. Acts 16.35-40. The Officers Troubled.
Aug. 27. Mk. 1.16-20. Following Christ.
Aug. 28. Lk. 15.11-21. The Prodigal Son.
Aug. 29. Rom. 10.1-10. Confessing Christ.
Aug. 30. Ps. 40.1-5. A New Standing and a New Song.
X. Aug. 31. Phil. 1.1-11. Paul's Prayer for the Philippians.
Sept. 1. Phil. 1.12-21. Life's Objective, Christ.
Sept. 2. Phil. 1.22-30. Suffering for Christ.
Sept. 3. Phil. 2.1-11. Christ-like Living.
Sept. 4. Phil. 2.12-18. Lights in the World.
Sept. 5. Phil. 3.12-21. Heavenly Citizenship.
Sept. 6. Phil. 4.10-20. Mutual Helpers.
XI. Sept. 7. Acts 17.1-12. Paul in Thessalonica and Berœa.
Sept. 8. Dt. 4.1-8. The Scriptures Make Wise.
Sept. 9. Ps. 119.9-16. The Scriptures Make Clean.
Sept. 10. Ps. 119.105-112. The Scriptures Make Happy.
Sept. 11. Rom. 15.1-6. The Scriptures Make Hopeful.
Sept. 12. 2 Tim. 3.14-17. The Scriptures Make Complete.
Sept. 13. 1 Thess. 5.12-24. Constructive Living.
XII. Sept. 14. 1 Thess. 1.1-10. A Responsive Church.
Sept. 15. 1 Thess. 2.1-12. Paul Writes to the Thessalonians
Sept. 16. 1 Thess. 3.1-10. Steadfast in Suffering.
Sept. 17. 1 Thess. 4.1-12. Walking in God's Way.
Sept. 18. 1 Thess. 4.13-18. Those Fallen Asleep.
Sept. 19. 1 Thess. 5.1-11. Sons of the Day.
Sept. 20. 2 Thess. 2.13-17. Chosen of the Lord.
XIII. Sept. 21. Acts 13.1-12. The Beginning of Foreign Missions.
Sept. 22. Acts 15.1-11. The Council at Jerusalem.
Sept. 23. Jas. 1.19-27. One Religion.
Sept. 24. Acts 15.36; 16.5. Strengthening the Churches.
Sept. 25. Acts 16.6-15. The Macedonian Call.
Sept. 26. Acts 16.19-34. Paul and the Philippian Jailor.
Sept. 27. Acts 17.1-12. Paul in Thessalonica and Berœa.

FOURTH QUARTER

I. Sept. 28. Acts 17.16-21. Paul in Athens.
Sept. 29. Acts 17.22-34. Paul on Mars Hill.
Sept. 30. 1 K. 18.30-39. Elijah on Mount Carmel.
Oct. 1. Dan. 5.17-28. Daniel in Babylon.
Oct. 2. Amos 4.4-13. Amos at Bethal.
Oct. 3. Acts 10.34-44. Peter at Cæsarea.
Oct. 4. Ps. 139.7-12. The Omnipresent God.
II. Oct. 5. Acts 18.1-11. Paul at Corinth.
Oct. 6. Acts 18.12-17. Paul Before Gallio.
Oct. 7. 1 Cor. 2.1-10. Paul's Preaching at Corinth.
Oct. 8. 1 Cor. 3.1-9. The Carnal Corinthians.
Oct. 9. 1 Cor. 1.10-18. The Corinthian Church Divided.
Oct. 10. 2 Cor. 1.1-11. Paul Comforts the Church.
Oct. 11. 1 Cor. 13.1-11. Love, the Supreme Grace.
III. Oct. 12. 1 Cor. 12.1-11. Concerning Spiritual Gifts.
Oct. 13. 1 Cor. 12.12-19. Diverse Gifts but the Same Spirit.
Oct. 14. 1 Cor. 12.20-31. Many Members but One Body.
Oct. 15. 2 Cor. 4.1-6. Christ a Revelation of the Father.
Oct. 16. 1 Cor. 15.1-11. The Gospel as Preached by Paul.
Oct. 17. 2 Cor. 13.1-11. Paul's Farewell to the Corinthian Church.
Oct. 18. 1 Jn. 4.7-13. Perfected in Love.
IV. Oct. 19. Acts 18.18-28. Paul and Apollos in Ephesus.
Oct. 20. Acts 19.1-12. Paul and the Baptist's Disciples.
Oct. 21. Acts 19.13-22. Paul and the Magicians.

Oct. 22. Acts 19.23-34. The Silversmith's Riot.
Oct. 23. Acts 19.35-41. The Rioters Rebuked.
Oct. 24. Eph. 1.1-14. Paul Writes to the Ephesian Church.
Oct. 25. Isa. 55.8-13. The Blessed State of tee Believer.

V. Oct. 26. Eph. 6.1-9. Obedience to Law.
Oct. 27. Eph. 6.10-20. Armed for the Evil Day.
Oct. 28. 1 K. 20.13-21. An Army Lost Through Drunkenness.
Oct. 29. Dan. 5.1-9, 31. A Kingdom Lost Through Drunkenness.
Oct. 30. Amos 6.1-8. Israel Destroyed by Drunkenness.
Oct. 31. 1 Thess. 5.1-11. Watchfulness and Sobriety.
Nov. 1. Ps. 94.1-8. The God of the Widow and the Fatherless.

VI. Nov. 2. Acts 20.1-6. Paul Leaves Ephesus.
Nov. 3. Acts 20.7-12. Paul Preaches at Troas.
Nov. 4. Acts 20.13-16. Paul Returns to Miletus.
Nov. 5. Acts 20.17-27. Paul's Farewell at Miletus.
Nov. 6. Acts 20.28-38. Paul's Charge to the Elders.
Nov. 7. Eph. 3.14-21. Paul's Prayer for the Ephesians.
Nov. 8. Ps. 126.1-6. Tears and Victory.

VII. Nov. 9. Acts 21.1-6. Paul Journeys Toward Jerusalem.
Nov. 10. Acts 21.7-14. In the Home of Philip the Evangelist.
Nov. 11. Acts 21.15-25. Paul Received at Jerusalem.
Nov. 12. Acts 21.26-36. Paul Arrested in the Temple.
Nov. 13. Acts 21.37-40. Paul's Address from the Stairs.
Nov. 14. Acts 22.22-30. A Citizen of Rome.
Nov. 15. Ps. 125.1-5. Jehovah Guards His People.

VIII. Nov. 16. Acts 21.1-11. Paul Before the Council.
Nov. 17. Acts 23.12-24. A Plot to Kill Paul.
Nov. 18. Acts 23.25-35. The Letter to Felix.
Nov. 19. Acts 24.1-9. Paul Accused Before Felix.
Nov. 20. Acts 24.10-21. Paul's Defense Before Felix.
Nov. 21. Acts 24.22-27. The Indecision of Felix.
Nov. 22. Ps. 86.11-17. Faith and Prayer in Trouble.

IX. Nov. 23. Acts 25.1-12. Paul Summoned Before Festus.
Nov. 24. Acts 25. 13-22. Festus Confers with Agrippa.
Nov. 25. Acts 26.1-11. Paul's Defense Before Agrippa.
Nov. 26. Acts 26.12-23. Paul's Defense Before Agrippa.
Nov. 27. Acts 26.24-32. Agrippa Declares Paul Innocent.
Nov. 28. Lk. 23.13-23. Pilate Declares Jesus Innocent.
Nov. 29. Ps. 43.1-5. A Prayer for Deliverance.

X. Nov. 30. Acts 27.1-8. Paul Sails for Rome.
Dec. 1. Acts 27.9-20. The Dangerous Voyage.
Dec. 2. Acts 27.21-26. Paul's Assurance.
Dec. 3. Acts 27.27-36. Paul Comforts His Comrades.
Dec. 4. Acts 27.37-44. The Shipwreck and the Escape.
Dec. 5. 2 Cor. 11.22-33. Paul's Perils and Sufferings.
Dec. 6. Ps. 107.23-32. Master of Wind and Wave.

XI. Dec. 7. Acts 28.1-10. Paul at Melita.
Dec. 8. Acts 28.11-16. Paul in Rome.
Dec. 9. Acts 28.17-23. Paul Preaches in Rome.
Dec. 10. Acts 28.24-31. Paul Wins Converts to Christ.
Dec. 11. Rom. 1.1-12. Paul Writes to the Romans.
Dec. 12. Rom. 13.8-14. Love the Fulfilling of the Law.
Dec. 13. Rom. 12.1-8. Self-dedication not Self-conceit.

XII. Dec. 14. 2 Tim. 3.10, 11; 4.6-18. Paul's Summary of His Life.
Dec. 15. Acts 7.54; 8.3. Saul the Persecutor.
Dec. 16. Acts 9.1-9. The Conversion of Saul.
Dec. 17. Gal. 1.11-24. Saul Called of God to Preach.
Dec. 18. Acts 11.19-30. Preaching and Teaching at Antioch.
Dec. 19. Acts 13.1-3; 44-52. The Apostle to the Gentiles.
Dec. 20. Rev. 21.1-7. The Crown of Righteousness.

XII. Dec. 14. Mt. 2.1-12. The Wise Men Seeking the King.
Dec. 15. Lk. 2.1-7. No Room in the Inn.
Dec. 16. Mt. 2.13-18. The Martyr Boys of Bethlehem.
Dec. 17. Mt. 2.19-23. The Return to Nazareth.
Dec. 18. Lk. 2.25-35. The Rejoicing of Simeon.
Dec. 19. Lk. 2.36-40. Anna the Prophetess.
Dec. 20. Lk. 2.8-14. The Angels' Song.

XIII. Dec. 21. Acts 17.22-34. Paul on Mars Hill.
Dec. 22. Acts 18.1-11. Paul at Corinth.
Dec. 23. Acts 20.28-38. Paul's Farewell to the Elders of Ephesus.
Dec. 24. Acts 27.37-44. Paul's Voyage and Shipwreck.
Dec. 25. Mt. 2.1-12. The Wise Men and the Star.
Dec. 26. Acts 28.11-23. Paul in Rome.
Dec. 27. Ps. 91.1, 2; 9-16. The Security of the Righteous.

Map illustrating the
ACTS of the APOSTLES
and the EPISTLES
SCALE OF MILES
0 50 100 150 200
1st Journey of Paul the Apostle
2nd " " " " "
3rd " " " " "
Journey to Rome of Paul the Apostle
Longitude East from Greenwich
ROME
Three Taverns
Market of Appius
Capua
Puteoli
Via Appia
Apennines
ITALY
ADRIATIC SEA
Dyrrachium
Brundisium
Tarentum
IONIAN SEA
SICILY
Messina
Rhegium
Syracuse
MELITA (MALTA)
DALMATIA
MOESIA
THRACE
BLACK SEA
Sangarius R.
Byzantium
Propontis
Sea of Marmora
ILLYRICUM
Via Egnatia
MACEDONIA
Philippi
Neapolis
Amphipolis
Apollonia
Thessalonica
SAMOTHRACE
Berœa
Mt. Olympus
Pindus Range
ACHAIA
OR GREECE
Corinth
Cenchreæ
Athens
AEGEAN SEA
LESBOS
Mitylene
CHIOS
SAMOS
PATMOS
COS
Cnidus
RHODES
Rhodes
Myra
CRETE
C. Salmone
Phœnice
CAUDA
Fair Havens
CYRENE
Cyrene
LIBYA
Alexandria
EGYPT
M. Ida
MYSIA
Troas
Assos
Adramyttium
Pergamum
Thyatira
Sardis R.
Smyrna
Philadelphia
Apamea
Hierapolis
Laodicea
Colossæ
Miletus
CARIA
LYCIA
Patara
Xanthus
Perga
Side
Cestrius R.
PAMPHYLIA
PISIDIA
Taurus Mts.
High Road to the East
Antioch
Iconium
Lystra
Derbe
Taurus
KINGDOM OF ANTIOCHUS
CILICIA TRACHEIA
Cilician Gates
Antitaurus Range
Tarsus
Cydnus R.
Syrian Gates
Antioch
Seleucia
CILICIA
SYRIA AND PHŒNICIA
Lebanon Mts.
Tripolis
Sidon
Tyre
Damascus
Ptolemais
Cæsarea
Samaria
Joppa
Lydda
Jerusalem
KINGDOM OF HEROD
CYPRUS
Salamis
Paphos
ASIA
ASIAN PHRYGIA
Pessinus
GALATIA
Ancyra
Tavium
BITHYNIA AND PONTUS
PAPHLAGONIA
Halys R.
KINGDOM OF POLEMON
CAPPADOCIA
Tyana
Caesarea
COMMAGENE
Tarsus
Cydnus R.
Antioch
Seleucia
Laodicea
Salamis
Paphos
Tripolis
Sidon
Tyre
Damascus
Ptolemais
Caesarea
Samaria
Joppa
Lydda
Jerusalem
KINGDOM OF HEROD
Alexandria
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
16°
20°
24°
28°
32°
36°
40°
32°
36°

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS

IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE FOR 1925

INTRODUCTION

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Prove All Things, Hold fast that which is Good. In these days, when in books and magazines and even upon the front pages of newspapers one is confronted with discussions—ofttimes wranglings—about the right interpretation of the Scriptures, a talk with Church-school teachers naturally turns to this subject first of all.

What shall be our attitude toward the mooted theological questions of the day? We must prepare our young people to meet the challenge, and we cannot rightly teach them unless we ourselves meet and face it. "The one great enemy the Prince of Darkness has to fear is the man who thinks," as Thomas Carlyle said. Do not fear to think upon these questions.

Let us come to the Bible fresh-mindedly and open-mindedly, for it invites to ever new discoveries of light and truth. Let us come in the spirit of John Wesley, who declared: "Whereinsoever I have mistaken, my mind is open to conviction. I sincerely desire to be better informed. I say to God and man, 'What I know not, teach thou me.'"

"We limit not the truth of God
To our poor reach of mind,
By notions of our day and sect,
Crude, partial, and confined:
No, let the new and better hope
Within our hearts be stirred—
The Lord hath yet more light and truth
To break forth from his Word."

It is good advice to

"Keep the old trail well in sight
Till you know the new is right."

Let us cherish our personal convictions in regard to questions concerning which so many have ranged themselves into two hostile camps; but let us welcome new light when it comes.

Let us consider sympathetically whatever leaders of Christian thought in whom we have confidence present to us, and then let us search the Scriptures, like the people of Berœa, to see "whether these things are so." "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good": this word of Paul's comes in one of our lessons, and it has its message for us in these days of controversy over the right understanding of the Scriptures. Prove the results of our modern scholarship; refuse to accept radical and unsound judgments; but gladly accept all that is vital and commends itself to your judgment as helpful and true.

The Thoughts of Men are Widened with the Process of the Suns. "Make our religion not like our clothes, for we can lay them aside," an Indian prayed;

"but make it like our tattoo marks that are always part of us." Theology, the science of religion, is like the clothes; religion itself is like the tattoo marks. Opinions about truth can be changed; truth itself is unchanging.

Man's opinions about what is truth differ greatly from age to age. This is strikingly illustrated in an article by Miss Margaret Slattery in The Church School, in which she discusses "the romance of fact" as opposed to "the finality of fact." She recalls the time, just a few years ago, when she taught that there was no vegetation north of the Arctic Circle save mosses and lichens and little snow flowers. All the authorities were behind that statement; the pictures in the geographies bore out her teachings. "I taught fact, not dreaming of the romance. Now Stefánsson shows me his pictures—green grass, blueberry bushes, purple asters, goldenrod—north of the Arctic Circle. Must I change my teaching? Shall a few blueberries and a green meadow change the picture of a lifetime? Yes, these are the facts. But within fifty years the facts bid fair to be changed. There may be comfortable homes in the midst of those meadows over which will roam thousands of reindeer whose meat, carried by airplane, will furnish food to Canada and the States. Yet the geographies in the majority of schoolrooms in America still picture the zone of cold in which nothing but mosses and lichens grow, and teachers still teach what the books say! The romance of fact has not touched them."

"To teach the finality of fact to childhood and youth is to do them the deepest injustice," Miss Slattery elsewhere in her article affirms. "Every fact of today should be taught with anticipation of a greater fact which will some day replace it. When a child is taught fact as it is known in the spirit of the discoverer and the explorer who looks, with keen anticipation, toward the 'more yet' which is to be, one need have no fear for him. I am not afraid for such a child when he comes face to face with life. The college professor who uses his opportunity to brush aside all that has been taught since childhood as fact, cannot do as much harm by that act as he can by teaching his own pitiable little measure of new truth as final —his poor limited ideas, based on limited facts now known as truth, as though all were said and done and those who accept his teachings may consider themselves educated and trained. It is in such teaching, wherever given, that intolerance is born. The child taught to believe in the romance of fact has nothing to fear from such as he."

A vast fund of knowledge along all lines is at our disposal which was unknown thirty years ago. Think of the discoveries that have been made during these last years in aviation, wireless telegraphy, sound transmission, chemistry, medicine, archæology, yes, and in theology. Each age starts out with a glorious heritage in all branches of learning, but discovers that some of it must be cast aside as new facts come into view. Do you recall how Jo, Meg, Beth, and Amy drop their bundles on the stairs as they act out Pilgrim's Progress in Little Women? So we must drop the bundles which prevent our gaining a truer understanding of religious truth, however accustomed to them we may have become. Some of the bundles consist of ideas which we imbibed as children because our immature minds could not grasp things save in a very literal way; some of them were gained from pictures and hymns which had no background of truth; some of them were the best ideas we could have gained before knowledge grew from more to more.

A mother overheard one of her daughters rebuking a younger sister for refusing to say her prayers.

"Nancy, you won't go to heaven if you don't say your prayers," the girl said in great distress.

"Don't want to go to heaven," was the response.

"Oh! Oh! Nancy! Don't you want to be near God in his beautiful Kingdom?"

"No. I don't like God. I don't like cross men with beards."

Then the mother understood. The child had formed her idea of the Father from a reproduction of an Italian painting which hung in her room.

Let us gladly give up false ideas for true, small ideas for larger ones. Our faith is not identical with the faith we had as children, although it has grown out of that faith. The mind of a growing teacher is not closed. He seeks to gain the truest possible understanding of what God's Word means, whether the knowledge comes through the Revised Version with its more faithful translation of the original Hebrew and Greek, or through the researches made by archæologists with pick and spade in Bible lands, or through the discoveries made by careful students of the Bible. Every day God's sun sheds new light upon his world, and every day God's prophets shed new light upon his Word.

There was once a Pope who justified universal butchery of Protestants by quoting, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." A teacher is in no danger of wilfully distorting a lesson, but he is in danger of unintentionally misinterpreting a lesson, and still more in danger of missing the vital truth of a lesson, unless he studies the contributions which the wisest and best minds have made to the text in hand.

At the close of his book entitled Sixty Years with the Bible, Dr. Clarke makes a beautiful acknowledgment of his own growth in the understanding of the Book. "I might have tried to live until now upon the ideas of the Bible and of God to which I had attained at the end of the fifties of the nineteenth century, true ideas and not unworthy then, but too small, too unspiritual for the needs of my later years; and I was glad that I could say to God and to my own soul that I had spent the lifetime of a man in enlarging, deepening and correcting the ideas that as a child I had received, and in seeking better foundation for a better faith."

As George Macdonald says, "Each generation must do its own seeking and finding. The father's having found is only the warrant for the children's search." And the right attitude in our quest is,

"Not, Is it old or is it new?
But, Is it false or is it true?"

The Spirit in which Theological Questions should be Discussed. The air is full of discord, and there are those who seemingly are ready to go down to death for the creed which stands to them for the truth of God. Yet creeds are made up of opinions and theories which are like clothes rather than like tattoo marks.

Peter had a "creed," inherited from his ancestors, which set limits to the operation of the grace of God. He and Cornelius met, and lo, his creed was too small, and he exclaimed, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him." Paul had a creed, that he, a Pharisee, was holier than other men, but when he met the Lord on the way to Damascus he found his creed too bigoted and exclaimed, "What must I do, Lord!" James had a creed that no Gentile could become a Christian unless he first became a Jew, but when he heard about the work of God among the Gentiles at Antioch he found his creed too narrow, and he affirmed, "My judgment is that we trouble not them that among the Gentiles turn to God."

"God is larger than the creeds": this is the wording of the inscription placed in a fine church at Hampstead Garden, England, at the expressed wish of Queen Victoria.

Benjamin Franklin makes Poor Richard say, "Many have quarreled about religion who have never practised it." "By this," said Jesus, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Let us have no scorn for anyone whose theological views differ from ours.

John Wesley's words make interesting reading here: "Are you persuaded that you see more clearly than me (I)? It is not unlikely that you may. Then treat me as you would desire to be treated yourself upon a change of circumstances. Point me out a better way than I have known. Show me it is so by plain proof of Scripture. And if I linger in the path I have been accustomed to tread, and am therefore unwilling to leave it, labor with me a little; take me by the hand, and lead me as I am able to bear. But be not displeased if I entreat you not to beat me down in order to quicken my pace; I can go but feebly and slowly at best; then, I should not be able to go at all. May I request you, further, not to give me hard names in order to bring me into the right way. Suppose I were ever so much in the wrong, I doubt this would set me right. Rather, it would make me run so much the farther from you, and so get more and more out of the way.

"Nay, perhaps, if you are angry, so shall I be, too; and then there will be small hopes of finding the truth. If once anger arise, the smoke will so dim the eyes of my soul, that I shall be able to see nothing clearly. For God's sake, if it is possible to avoid it, let us not provoke one another to wrath. Let us not kindle in each other this fire of hell; much less blow it up into a flame. If by that light we could discern truth, would it not be loss, rather than gain? For, how far is love, even with many wrong opinions, to be preferred before truth itself without love! We may die without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried to Abraham's bosom. But if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? Just as much as it avails for the devil and his angels."

"Where there are two minds, there are three opinions." To use the figure of a writer in The Christian Herald, as the light falling upon objects produces diverse colors and shades, so every mind apprehends the same truth in variant terms. How

shall all these divergent conceptions be made to harmonize? "There must be agreement, or there can be no love, joy, or success; and there must be diversity, or there can be no individuality, no freedom, no 'diversities of gifts.' The problem is solved by the rule, 'In essentials Unity, in nonessentials Liberty, in all things Charity.'"

The Bible is Inspired. The Bible is a unique book, not on a par with any other book in the world. It is unique because it produces results which no other book can produce. "It makes bad men good, and good men better." In it we find God. It is the Word of God. The danger is not in failing to see that the Bible is inspired, but in failing to live inspired lives because of the Bible.

The Bible is an inspired Book: there can be no question about that. The question is not as to the inspiration of the Bible, but as to the nature of its inspiration. Upon the question as to the nature of the inspiration of the Bible not all Christians are agreed.

The view held by many sincere Christians is that every word is the inspired word of God. It is the words "in the original writings" which are thus inspired, they say. The oldest manuscripts of the Scriptures now extant do not go back farther than two centuries after all the books of the New Testament were written. Thousands of variations (most of them slight) have been found in ancient manuscripts of the New Testament alone.

The other view held by equally sincere Christians is that the Bible is the product of actual human experience, and yet of experience divinely controlled. "The Biblical writers undertook to set forth in a perfectly human way, the religious ideas and sentiments that God awakened in their souls. Through succeeding centuries these truths grew clearer and more comprehensive until they culminated in the life and teaching of Jesus.

In our lessons this year we see Paul in The Acts traveling from place to place, and we gain some knowledge of the conditions under which he preached and taught, and then in his letters we read what he wrote to the churches which he founded. Read his letters, which form a large part of our New Testament, with the two views of inspiration of the Bible in mind, and thoughtfully consider whether or not the view which you hold is the true one.

The Teacher Must be Helped by the Great Biblical Scholars. The Bible is a progressive record of a progressive revelation of God, culminating in Jesus Christ, through whose life and words the entire history is to be tested and interpreted.

The Books of the Bible were written during a thousand years of the mental and spiritual development of the people chosen by God because of their spiritual capacity, through whom he was progressively revealing himself. While a large part of these writings is universal in character, a large part also is purely local; portions are timeless, and other portions, temporary; much is vital, and much is incidental. The ability to grasp these distinctions requires careful, scholarly study. Many devout scholars have labored long upon the problems of the Bible, and we can be their heirs if we will.

There are scholars who painstakingly study the various manuscripts from which our English Bible has been translated, comparing word with word, and phrase with phrase. As an example of the work of these textual scholars, recall the story of the man whom Jesus healed at Bethesda. In the Authorized Version we have the verse which says that an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water, and the one who stepped in first after the troubling of the water was healed of whatsoever disease he had. This verse is omitted in the Revised Version because it is lacking in the two oldest and best manuscripts. What probably happened is this. The story did not explain the healing value of the spring. Some copyist, after these oldest manuscripts were written and therefore as late as the fifth century, must have added this explanation on the margin of his copy, and later another copyist incorporated it in the text.

There are other Biblical scholars who strive to learn what may be known as to the authorship, date and historical background of the Books of the Bible. We best understand any writing when we know by whom it was written, when, under what circumstances, for what purpose. What sense could we make out of Benjamin Franklin's autobiography, for instance, if we supposed it were written within the last decade? What would many of our newspaper editorials of today (spring, 1924) mean, if we did not know the circumstances connected with "the oil scandal"? How could we understand references to "the closed saloon," the "wets

and the drys," the "bootleggers," if we did not know of the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment? In like manner the Biblical writings must be read in the light of the circumstances in which they arose.

In Bernard Shaw's play of St. Joan, a character asks, "Are you an Englishman?" and the one questioned replies, "No, I am a gentleman," whereat the audience laughs immoderately. The people laugh because they do not understand that the time is 1429, when the word *Englishman* was just coming into being, and was not acceptable to many who called themselves followers of Essex, of Sussex, and so on. It is in ways such as this that we misunderstand the force of portions of the Bible if we fail to take into consideration the times in which they were written and the ideas that then were held.

The Teacher Must Think.

"Whatsoever—deep or shallow, new or old—
Is clearly thought can be as clearly told."

Sir Joshua Reynolds once made the cynical remark that "There is no expedient to which a man will not resort to avoid the real labor of thinking," and there is a measure of truth in his words. "One of the great obstacles with which we have to deal in our Bible study," declares Professor Charles Foster Kent, "is the idea that the Bible can be studied somehow without any effort, at any time, without any knowledge." The Church-school teacher has neither time nor opportunity to search for all the information and illumination needed to rightly teach a given lesson, but he must have the time and the willingness to adapt and make his own what he finds prepared for him in lesson helps.

In the announcement of a lesson help whose "material is kept within the limits allowed for the lesson period," one is told that "Lesson helps are plenty (plentiful) that supply material enough for a lesson period of one or two hours and throw all the burden of selecting what can be crowded in an orderly way into twenty or thirty minutes on those who know that they do not possess this special gift." How successful a teacher can he be who lacks the ability (not a "special gift") to select and arrange from a lesson help what is most suitable and useful for his own class? How can the writer of a lesson help furnish in what can be read in ten minutes material enough for teachers of pupils of varying ages, intelligence and needs?

When I read the criticism that lesson helps contain too much I think of the situation so strikingly depicted by A. S. M. Hutchinson in his book entitled If Winter Comes. Mark Sabre had sought about in his mind for something to say, and there was nothing in his mind to say. "He had an absurd vision of his two hands feeling about in the polished interior of his skull, as one might fumble for something in a large jar. At the end of an enormous cavity of time he found some slight remark."

A house with more room than is absolutely necessary, a bank account with more on deposit than needful for immediate expenditure, a head filled with more knowledge than must be used—all tend to give a sense of comfort and assurance and mastery of the situation.

The Closing Period of Christ's Ministry. Our Improved Uniform Course for 1924 and 1925 covers the historical portions of the entire Bible. Last year we rapidly reviewed the Old Testament history and the life of Christ up to the scenes of Holy Week. This year we shall spend the First Quarter upon the closing week of Christ's ministry, and then the remainder of the year upon the spread of Christianity as told in The Acts and the Epistles of Paul.

More than one-third of the entire Gospels of Matthew, Mark and John, and more than one-fourth of the Gospel of Luke, are occupied with the last week of Christ's life. This is due not only to the great importance which the Evangelists attached to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus (and here we shall wisely heed Dr. Jowett's counsel not to try to explain them—just tell pupils about them), but also to the large number of discourses with which that solemn time was crowded. On three successive Sundays we study the beautiful words of Jesus which are recorded in John 14, 15 and 17.

Much of your success in teaching these lessons from the Gospels will depend upon your ability to regain the freshness and vividness and power of scenes and words which would come with a first reading. Our very familiarity here may be a hindrance.

There is great difference between leading pupils to know about Christ, and leading them to know Christ, between the knowledge of the biography of Christ and the

knowledge of Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world. Would that they might all gladly say with Phillips Brooks that "The influence of Jesus is to me more and more the glory and the richness and the sweetness of all life. Jesus is the illumination and the inspiration of existence. Without him the world would be a puzzle, and death a horror, and eternity a blank."

The Spread of Christianity. In the Acts we have the sequel of the Gospels. The mighty Figure of the Gospels is lost to view, but the mighty, unseen Spirit is at work through his followers.

In The Acts we see the rapid spread of Christianity. At first we are in the familiar land of Judea, and Jerusalem is still the center of activity; then the good news spreads to Samaria and the hated Samaritans; next it is carried northward into Syria, and Antioch becomes the center whence the gospel spreads across Asia Minor and into the great cities of Europe—Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, and Rome.

The Acts is the great missionary book, and in its study we learn perforce to think in world terms. "The Acts is a serial story of the first Christian missionary enterprise," and Basil Mathews is right in saying that its meaning lies in being a record of the Holy Spirit's energies pulsating in men and driving them on to missionary campaigns of unparalleled vigor and vehemence.

With thirty millions in the Church-schools of the world, and four hundred millions not yet reached, is everything possible now being done to carry out Christ's command and make him known to the youth of the world? In the hands of Church-school teachers lies the key to the progress of world evangelization, for theirs is the opportunity of training the coming world leaders, of bringing about within a generation a Church whose knowledge in regard to missions and zeal and service in forwarding missions shall exceed anything hitherto known. Shall we not gladly face our part in the great work?

How to Know The Acts. No one can really know a work of literature who has not read it through. No one is qualified to speak upon one of Shakespeare's works who is familiar only with the parts oftenest quoted. No one can wisely teach The Acts, or any Book of the Bible, who knows only certain sections of it. It requires but a short time to read through slowly and thoughtfully the entire Book of The Acts. It has only twenty-eight chapters covering thirty-six pages in the Revised Version. Would you hesitate to read consecutively thirty-six pages of your favorite author? You will teach far more successfully if you have a thorough knowledge of the Book as a whole, its scope and its purpose, than if you teach each lesson as if unrelated to the rest of the history.

Three things every teacher should seek to accomplish with his pupils during this course: (1) to have them gain a knowledge of how the Great Commission was carried out by Christ's followers, first by Peter and the Jerusalem group and then by Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles; (2) to give them a knowledge of Paul's life—detailed, of course, only in the older groups; and (3) to implant in their minds the desire and the will to make their own lives of service in Christ's Kingdom.

The Giant Figure of Paul. Across many a reporter's copy when returned to him from the editorial office of a great newspaper is scrawled in blue pencil the letters H I, which stand for "Human Interest." "Your copy lacks human interest —put it in," the letters mean. The human interest can never be lacking in our lessons from The Acts. Peter was a very human apostle, and the struggle through which he passed before he became convinced that Christianity was for others as well as for Jews grips the heart. The most human of all the apostles was Paul, and thrilling is the story of his missionary journeys whereby he made Christianity a world religion.

The greatest man that ever sailed the Mediterranean Sea was not Alexander, nor Hannibal, nor Cæsar, but Paul. Although Paul was the ablest, most brilliant and most forceful of all the apostles, yet those are not the qualities which have made him so real a personality to all who have known him during the centuries that have intervened between his life and ours. Rather is it the fact that in The Acts and in his Letters we see an eager, strenuous, toiling *man*, beset with temptations and facing difficulties such as men today have to meet who, like Paul, are persistently led by high ideals.

The general topic of our last two Quarters' lessons might be stated as The Power

of a Great Personality. Next to Christ there is no figure in the Bible so towering as Paul; no one whose words bear so vitally upon the Christian faith and interests and problems of our own day.

We see Paul called to a great adventure, and we see him make it in the company of Christ. "It is a great lesson of what one man thoroughly in earnest, thoroughly consecrated, thoroughly alive, and thoroughly Christian, could do for his times and for all times. On the other hand, it is a great lesson as to what Christianity could do for a masterful man, a keen intellect, a born leader, a many-sided character—for Paul was all this before he was obedient to the heavenly vision—but it was by the power of Jesus Christ that he found the fulcrum whereby the could move the world."

"Judged by his influence on human history," writes Henry Drummond, "no human life is entitled to more admiration for what it has done or is indeed more worthy of admiration for what it was."

Dr. Charles E. Jefferson writes of Paul: "That Paul was an extraordinary personality is proved by the commotion he stirred up in his own lifetime. The Thessalonians said of him that he 'turned the whole world upside down.' He filled synagogues with commotion and set cities blazing. He stirred up riots and drove mobs frantic. By the vigor of his faith, the intensity of his devotion, the fullness of his sacrifice, the passion of his enthusiasm, and the scope of his achievements, he cast all other Apostles and Prophets and Pastors and Teachers into the shade, and became the central figure of the Christian world.

"Great in his character, he was equally great in his achievements. He is the Christian Hercules, and his labors are so varied and wonderful, that we sometimes lose the man in the blaze of the glory of the things he accomplished. It was he who converted a Jewish sect into a world religion. It was he who placed the cross of Jesus at the center of human history, and also at the center of the universe. It was he also who broke down the wall of separation between the Jew and the Gentile, and gathered all men into one family of God. When we read the highest paragraphs in the greatest of his letters, we find it easy to believe that men can be inspired by God. John Chrysostom wrote a memorable sentence when he said of Paul—'Three cubits in stature, he touched the sky.'"

"We actually give a boy one hundred per cent in hygiene who can pass a perfect examination in the subject, even though his teeth are decayed, his hands dirty, and his shoulders stooped." a prominent high school teacher acknowledged. "It is no trick at all," he continued, "to teach a boy so that he can glibly recite the evils of cigarette smoking, for instance, but so to train him that he will not smoke cigarettes is another matter." It is not enough to know the facts connected with Paul's life; it is not enough to admire the man, his intellect, his greatness as a thinker and a theologian, his forcefulness as a preacher, his success as a missionary, his power as a writer. God has revealed to us great truths through the personality of Paul. For these truths his record has been preserved, and for these truths it is abundantly worth while to devote six months of the year to a study of his life and letters. Everywhere the record rings with trumpet-calls to action; do not let them go unheeded.

Books upon The Acts. Teachers will find Dr. Charles E. Jefferson's book, The Character of Paul, informative and inspiring. Its thoughtful perusal will give them a grasp of Paul the man and the theologian. In the Suggestions for Bible Class Discussions I have indicated the chapters of Dr. Jefferson's book which may profitably be considered with the text for the day.

Another recent and very suggestive book is by Dr. G. Campbell Morgan and is entitled The Acts of the Apostles. "Do not miss the naturalness of these stories, the homeliness of these records, for in these things the infinite value of them is found," he writes. This is the special service which Dr. Morgan's book renders. In an interesting and helpful way it draws attention to lessons which are often missed, and is a book which should be in the library of every teacher. As it takes up the chapters of The Acts consecutively, it can readily be followed week by week with our course.

There is another book which I would heartily commend to teachers, especially those who are instructing Intermediates and Seniors—Basil Mathews' Paul the Dauntless. Here the story of Paul's adventures is told with entire fidelity to fact and with such remarkable vividness that the hero and the times live before one's

eyes. By meeting the class in a few extra sessions the whole book might be read to Intermediate pupils during the six months that we shall spend with Paul; and it would hold their interest to the end.

The Continuation of The Acts. We are fond of saying that The Acts of the Apostles has never been finished, that it is all the while being written. Speaking with this thought in mind, Dr. Lynn H. Hough asks: "Who is to bring the fierce energy of Peter into the Church today? Who is to bring the ripened mystical gladness of John into the modern Church? Who is to bring the searching, insistent mind of Paul to all the problems involved in the interpretation of the Christian faith in our time? Who is to bring the heart and the hand of Barnabas to the great missionary tasks which now confront us? Who will furnish the will and the deeds for the great record of contemporary Christian achievement?"

The young men and young women of today, we answer. There are young people who care for nothing but their own pleasure, but there are also young people who have visions and dream dreams which they will bring to pass, young people with enthusiasm and readiness to do the impossible.

It was in 1900 that the Christian Endeavor Convention met at Atlantic City and not only voted for National Prohibition but prophesied that it would come to pass. It was in 1924 that the Student Volunteer Convention met at Indianapolis and endorsed the League of Nations and passed unanimously a resolution that the United States should cooperate with the other world Powers in an endeavor to bring about universal peace.

As The Christian Century reminds us, the modern young man and young woman have been plentifully belabored for their lack of interest in the highest causes, but most of their surface indifference grows out of the conviction held by the oncoming generation that those who now stand as exponents of these high causes are really only playing with the fringes of the issues involved. Can the amazing pledge which the Student Fellowship for Christian Life Service considers should be signed by college students be taken as a fair criterion of their attitude? Here it is:—

"I recognize the domination of pagan principles and motives in present day business relationships, especially as shown in the flagrant disregard for human values in industry, the widespread denial of brotherhood between the white and colored races, and the devastation of the greatest values in life by war. I am confronted with the need for men and women with the spirit of Christ who will, at whatever cost, strive to make the principles of love and service effective in all these relationships throughout the world. I cannot do less than give my life to this task, and I solemnly covenant with God that I will earnestly seek until I find where I can be most effectively used by him. It is my purpose, with God's help, to stand for the supremacy of human values above all other values in life; to make the principles of love and service, as exemplified in the life, the teaching and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the dominating motive of my life, with the full realization that this commitment may involve me in personal sacrifice, social ostracism and financial hardship."

The spirit of youth calls for intellectual and moral adventures. It wants to face the big issues. It is along the lines of action that the Church will succeed in gripping the youth of today.

THE BOOKS IN THE COURSE

THE GOSPELS

A Reference. In last year's Teachers' Guide there is a discussion of the Four Gospels, their writers, their dates, a comparison of the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel, and discussions of for whom they were written and the contents peculiar to each. See pages 21 and 22 of that volume.

THE ACTS

The Title. The Acts, the book is called in the Revised Version; The Acts of the Apostles is its full title in the Authorized Version; Acts of Apostles (a less definite title) is found on one Greek manuscript. The book is not an account of the acts

of all the apostles: it tells of acts of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, but aside from the list of the Apostles given in 1.13, only Peter, John and the two Jameses are mentioned again by name. A native of Africa gave the book a good title, one which Dan Crawford says has a thrill in it—*Words Concerning Deeds.*

By Whom Written. Two theories are held in regard to the authorship of The Acts. Some scholars believe that it was edited by an unknown writer of the second century from several documents, among them the "Travel Documents," which were probably written by Luke. The majority of scholars believe that Luke was the writer of the entire book.

The book itself does not name the writer. However, in his introductory sentence, he tells us that it is a continuation of a former work; he addresses it to a certain Theophilus, to whom also the Third Gospel is addressed; and The Acts resembles the Third Gospel in vocabulary and style. The early Christian writers speak of Luke as the author of both the Third Gospel and The Acts. The Acts is Volume II, as it were, of Luke's History of the Origin and Spread of Christianity, the Gospel According to Luke being Volume I.

Luke was a Greek by birth, and a physician by profession. Not only was he Paul's companion on many journeys, as the use of the pronoun *we* shows, but he was with Paul in Rome when he wrote Colossians and Philemon, and was his sole companion and friend when he wrote his Second Epistle to Timothy shortly before his death. Luke is mentioned by name but three times in all the New Testament; and each time by Paul, who calls him "the beloved physician."

The Date. Great divergence of opinion exists as to the probable date when this history was written. It was known in Rome (as the First Epistle of Clement shows) by 95 A. D. Because it contains no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem its date is placed by some before 70 A. D., but this inference is not conclusive. Because it records the first imprisonment of Paul at Rome its date may be given as subsequent to 63 A. D.

The Purpose of the Book. The book is not a biography of the apostles. It is not an account of the acts, or lives, of even Peter and Paul. Peter disappears from the record after the fifteenth chapter, not because his work has ceased, but because the progress of Christianity left Peter and the Jewish field on one side and developed the Gentile field under Paul. The Acts is the history of the expansion of the early Church. It is the story of men who had learned of Christ and were fulfilling his commission to teach the world. It is Christianity in action.

In his introduction Luke declares the purpose of his writing, and gives the three keynotes by which it is to be understood. As his former work, his Gospel, is a record of all that Jesus *began* to do and to teach until he was received up, so this work is (1) a record of what Jesus *continued* to do and to teach through his followers. Jesus had commanded them to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The Acts records (2) how this command was fulfilled. This command to preach the Gospel was given "through the Holy Spirit," and it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that the command is obeyed. The Acts has been called (3) "The Gospel of the Holy Spirit," for his guidance is recognized at every step.

In the course of his narrative, Luke plainly shows the growth of Christianity from a Jewish sect to a world-wide religion; the freeing of Gentile Christianity from Jewish law; and the supreme greatness of Paul, whose "acts" occupy three-fifths of the book.

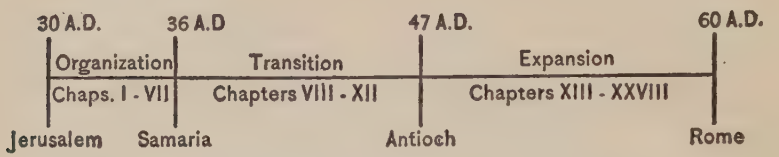
The Character of the Book. It is turbulent, tumultuous history which the book records. It is a record of triumphant achievements in spite of Jewish jealousy, prejudice and persecution, pagan opposition, and Roman power.

The theme of the preaching is Jesus the Christ. Thirteen great prayer-meetings, nine great revivals, and ten great sermons are recorded.

The Reliability of the Book. Bishop Lightfoot has pointed out that the veracity of no ancient writing is so well tested as that of The Acts, because no other has such numerous points of contact in all directions with contemporary history, politics, and topography, whether Jewish or Greek or Roman. The history of The Acts covers a period of thirty years, enacted in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and Italy. During that time political changes were frequent, and yet Luke is never found at

fault, whether writing of imperial provinces or senatorial provinces, of proconsuls, procurators, politarchs, asiarchs, or prætors, or of the Sanhedrin and Herodian princes and rulers of synagogues.

The Outline of the Book.



I. Introduction. 1.1-5.
II. The Christian Community at Jerusalem under the Leadership of Peter. 1.6-6.6.
III. The Martyrdom of Stephen. 6.7-8.1.
IV. Evangelization in Judea and Samaria under the Leadership of Philip and Peter, 8.2-11.18. (Paul's Conversion. 9.1-30.)
V. Ministry of Barnabas and Paul at Antioch in Syria. 11.19-30.
VI. Persecution of the Church at Jerusalem. 12.1-25.
VII. Evangelization of Asia Minor and Europe under the Leadership of Paul. 13.1-28.31.
1. Paul's First Missionary Journey. 13.1-14.28.
2. The Council at Jerusalem and the Grant of Gentile Liberty. 15.1-35.
3. Paul's Second Missionary Journey. 15.36-18.22.
4. Paul's Third Missionary Journey. 18.23-21.16.
VIII. Paul's Last Years. 21.17-28.31.

Lessons for Today. There is a mighty force in the book impelling toward Christian love, missionary zeal, and heroic living. Who can read it without an irresistible desire to have his share in making Jesus the Christ known to the uttermost part of the earth?

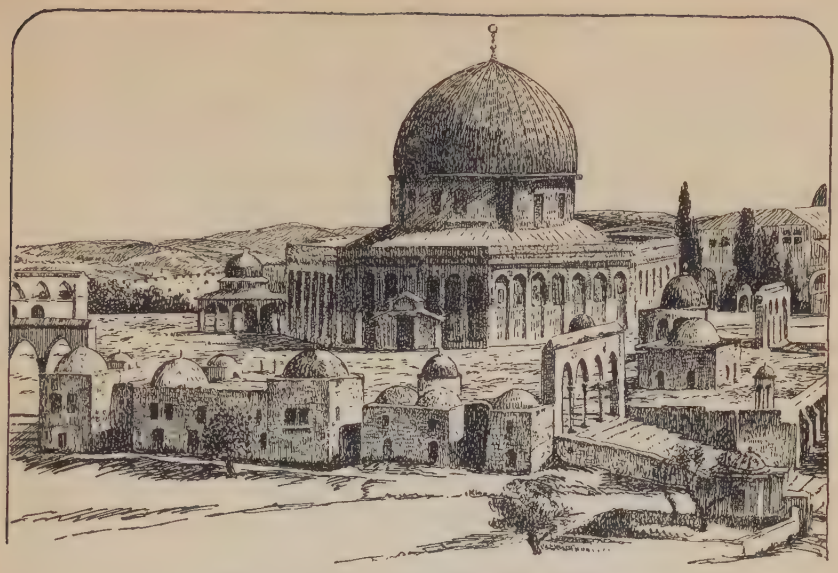
THE PAULINE EPISTLES

The Relation of the Letters of Paul to the Book of The Acts. Twenty-one of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament are in the form of letters, and thirteen of them were written by Paul. Paul's letters both confirm and supplement The Acts. In The Acts we have the external objective history of the primitive church; in the Epistles, the subjective, internal record. The history and the letters agree in all essential points, but the letters tell about Paul's stay in Arabia, about the trouble with Peter at Antioch, about persecutions manifold, etc., not recorded in the history.

The Chronological Order of the Pauline Epistles. The order in which Paul's letters are printed in the New Testament is not the order in which they were written. The longest letters are printed first, and perhaps at the time the arrangement was made the supposed order of importance of the churches and individuals to whom the letters were written influenced the order of their presentation. The right way in which to study them is their historical order. They may be conveniently arranged in four groups:

I. The Earliest Letters: First and Second Thessalonians.
II. The Controversial Letters: First and Second Corinthians, Galatians and Romans.
III. The Prison Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.
IV. The Pastoral Letters: First and Second Timothy and Titus.

Here and there in the course of our Study of The Acts we pause to consider Paul's forceful words in one of his epistles. Some day perhaps our Lesson Committee will give us a series of lessons with Paul the Letter Writer.



THE TEMPLE AREA AT JERUSALEM TODAY

FIRST QUARTER

THE LIFE OF JESUS (HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS)

III. Closing Period of Christ's Ministry

(Third Quarter of a Nine Months' Course)

LESSON I—JANUARY 4

CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

GOLDEN TEXT: Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord. Luke 19.38

LESSON Luke 19.29-44 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 118.21-29

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 21.1-16; Mark 11.1-11; John 12.12-19

LUKE 19.29 And it came to pass, when he drew nigh unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, Go your way into the village over against *you*; in which as ye enter ye shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat: loose him, and bring him. 31 And if any one ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say, The Lord hath need of him. 32 And they that were sent went away, and found even as he had said unto them. 33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? 34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him. 35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they threw their garments upon the colt, and set Jesus thereon. 36 And as he went, they spread their garments in the way. 37 And as he was now drawing nigh, *even* at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen; 38 saying, Blessed *is* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. 39 And some of the Pharisees from the multitude said unto him, Teacher, rebuke thy disciples. 40 And he answered and said, I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. PREPARATIONS FOR CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF JERUSALEM, verses 29-35. See The Historical Background. Jesus and his disciples

were approaching Jerusalem. When in the neighborhood of Bethphage and Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples ahead to make preparations for his entering Jerusalem. A few days later it was Peter and John who were sent in advance to prepare for the Passover feast: perhaps to them was also assigned this earlier duty. From the village Jesus bade them bring a colt that had never been ridden, which they would find tied there. Should the owners of the colt object, the disciples need only say, "The Lord hath need of him."

"Let the ass stand as the modest representative of the material values of the world. The Lord has need of them all. His purpose for the race can only be achieved as these materials are yielded to him in willing consecration. The farms and the mines, the stores and the shops, the railroads and the steamships, must yield to the mastery of his spirit and be administered with reference to the high ends of human well-being which he held steadily in view" (Dr. C. R. Brown).

And they that were sent went away, and found even as he had said unto them.

"Jesus spoke with infallible accuracy. Those who obeyed him found him true. And those who take his commands and go on his higher and longer ways, moving in sheer faith, keep finding that the experiences correspond with his prophecies. He tells us whither to go that we may find rest, and peace, and joy, and righteousness. Our hearts take his word for it all, and they go in the directions that he appoints. There are millions of testimonies to the glorious effect that it is 'even as he said'" (Bishop E. H. Hughes).

When the disciples had brought the animal, they threw upon the colt their loose, outer robes, and assisted Jesus to mount. And thus he rode into the city of Jerusalem, and by this act aroused the people's swift recollection of Zechariah's prophecy (9.9):

Tell ye the daughter of Zion,
Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,
Meek, and riding upon an ass,
And upon a colt the foal of an ass.

The horse was used in warfare: the ass was the fitting animal for the Prince of Peace. "Christ's love for the city of his ancestors clothed itself in this prophetic symbolism and caused him to make his last appeal to Jerusalem for recognition of himself as God's anointed Son. Like the prophet Jeremiah, he was commissioned to make an appeal which he foreknew would be rejected, to create an opportunity which no one apprehended" (Wm. A. Grist).

"Have we taken him for our King? His Palm Sunday offer of himself to his own city is repeated in the offer which he makes of himself to every heart. Let us set our own soul on that rocky hill and see Christ come to it. Long heard of, not a stranger, having often passed before our sight, at last he comes finally and formally to claim us for his own, to solemnly assert that we belong to him, to bid us make our choice whether we will take him for our King or not. Such days do come to all of us—days when we feel as if the Savior, who had been long tempting us, had gathered up all his power of appeal and expected to be then either accepted or rejected; days when the chance of the new spiritual life seems to stand with peculiar solemnity before our heart. Such days are to us what Palm Sunday was to Jerusalem" (Phillips Brooks).

II. CHRIST'S ROYAL PROGRESS, verses 36-38. As Jesus rode along, the people spread their garments on the highway before him, Matthew reports, and strewed it with branches from the trees. We are wont to refer to these branches as palm branches, but the only foundation for this assumption is the fact that the people who, excited by the news of the raising of Lazarus, came out from Jerusalem to meet Jesus (John 12.13), carried branches of palms, the symbols of rejoicing (Rev. 7.9). Following with him was another crowd on their way to the city to keep the Passover. The whole multitude began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen. "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord," they cried, that is, Blessed is the Messiah, who cometh by the authority of God. "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest": these words were taken from the Messianic Psalm, 118, the last one of the five "Hallel" Psalms which were always sung by the people as they wended their way around the altar at the great feasts.

"Jesus asks not so much to be garlanded with our wreaths as to be loved: not so much to be saluted with our hosannas as to be loyally served; not so much to be hailed as King all glorious with jeweled crown and robes of purple and gold as to be received with the intimacy of friendship and brotherhood: it is the royalty of influence that he claims rather than the royalty of state."

III. CHRIST'S CERTAINTY OF HIS KINGSHIP, verses 39, 40. "Teacher, rebuke thy disciples," commanded some of the Pharisees. "I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out," returned Jesus. It has been thought that this refers to Habakkuk 2.11. "The stones will cry out," however, was doubtless a proverbial expression meaning that even the insensible would be aroused to give expression to interest. The welcome which Jesus received as King was inevitable—it had to be.

"We stand here in the twentieth century better able to appreciate the full royalty of the nature of Christ, because of what we have seen in the ages since of the blessed results of his reign. What should be our response? Let it come in a more complete devotement of our total life to this King of Kings! Let Church and State, market-place and school, and, best of all, the home, stand together in glad allegiance before him, crying, 'Hosanna! Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord!'" (Dean Charles Reynolds Brown).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. After the feeding of the five thousand, what did the multitudes wish to have Jesus proclaimed? Why did he refuse? What miracle did he work at Bethany which gave him great popularity?

The Last Week of Jesus's Life. It is the events of the last week of April, A. D. 30, which we study during this entire Quarter, beginning with the day which we call Palm Sunday.

It was the Passover Season when excitement was intense in Jerusalem. "There was no populous city, no remote hamlet, that did not furnish its contingent to what was practically an assembly of the entire nation. These innumerable bands of pilgrims marched upon Jerusalem from every quarter, singing the ancient Psalms of Israel, encouraging in one another a joyous ecstasy, full of eager hopes of some great national deliverance, to which the past history of the race, and especially the history of the Passover itself, gave vigorous sanction. It has been calculated that not fewer than a million strangers thus gathered in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. Camps sprang up outside the walls of Jerusalem; every road leading to the city was thronged with pilgrims, who daily increased in numbers as the solemn day drew near. At this Passover there passed from lip to lip the story of the raising of Lazarus, the rumored marvels of the Galilean ministry, and many proofs of Messiahship which Jesus had given. The interest of the Feast was centered, not in the temple, but in him."

Palms on Sunday; the crown of thorns on Thursday; the cross on Friday—such were the gifts of the city over which Jesus wept. The morning and the evening of Sunday itself were in painful contrast: acclaimed King in the morning, in the evening Jesus quietly left the city accompanied only by the Twelve, silent, defeated, in danger of the assassin's thrust. "Those followers who had acclaimed him as the Messiah in the morning were chagrined at this disappointing of their hopes; when they saw no stupendous miracle, and looked on him as he allowed his own movement to flicker out without accomplishing anything great, they were angry with him, feeling that he had deluded them with the words of an empty dream."

For the Blackboard. *Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, April 1.* Arrival at Bethany. Anointing at Supper. Mt. 26.6-13; Mk. 14.3-9; Jn. 11.55 to 12.11.

Sunday, "Palm Sunday," April 2. Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. Healing and Hosannas in the Temple. Return to Bethany. Mt. 21.1-10, 14-17; Mk. 11.1-11; Lk. 19.29-44; Jn. 12.12-19.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Jesus came to *Bethany* six days before the Passover, Jn. 12.1. The Mount of Olives is the range of hills east of Jerusalem, separated from it by the Kidron Valley. Bethany lay on the southeastern slope of the Mount, only two miles from

the city. There is a little village there today which is called El-Azarijah, the Arab name for Lazarus, for it was the home of Lazarus and Mary and Martha. To Bethany Jesus returned each night during the last week of his life.

Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives

Bethphage was either a village close to Bethany or a district including Bethany. The Talmud says, "Whatever is in the exterior circuit of Jerusalem is called Bethphage."

On the way from Bethany to Jerusalem the road makes an abrupt turn to the north, and there the city, which has been hidden by a spur of the mountain, suddenly bursts upon one's view—and what a majestic spectacle it is, gleaming in the bright sunlight across the intervening valley—"the joy of the whole earth"! Here it must have been that Jesus wept over it, verse 41. The triumphal procession crossed the Brook Kidron and entered Jerusalem through the Golden Gate.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

An appeal to the eye and ear and heart may awaken sentiment and prepare the way for the surrender of the will. Jesus was offering himself as King for the last time, and therefore his offer was made in the most impressive way. He appealed to the imagination. He stirred the emotions. He did not mean that he was to be such a King as the people supposed; the borrowed colt, the garments of peasants, the banners of leafy branches were not to be the permanent furnishings of a court. He wished to secure the submission of their wills, the complete surrender of their lives, and therefore he made this stirring, dramatic, emotional appeal to the multitudes. He knew that religious feeling is an aid to religious faith.—Dr. Charles R. Erdman, in The Gospel of Luke.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. When Mr. Roosevelt returned from Africa with rare specimens for the Smithsonian Institute, he was welcomed by thousands of cheering, waving, enthusiastic admirers. That same day he said to his sister, "And they soon will be throwing rotten apples at me." He knew the fickleness of human nature.

No one knew that fickleness better than did Jesus. "They soon will be clamoring for my death," he must have said to himself as he rode into Jerusalem hailed by the joyous throng as their King. Why did he accept their plaudits?

The Triumphal Entry was Christ's Assertion of his Kingship. Deliberately he planned for it. Why? Often during his public ministry he cautioned some one not to report a miracle wrought, and he charged his disciples to tell no man that he was the Christ. After the feeding of the five thousand he hid himself among the hills in order to escape the people who would make him king. He feared that popular enthusiasm would hinder his work of teaching. Now, however, he no longer dreads interruption to his work. His hour is come. He knows his end is near. He seeks publicity, courts the enthusiastic applause of the people, lets the world know that he is the Messiah. It is his last appeal to the nation that he loves.

A Meek King! The manner of his riding into Jerusalem was in keeping with all his appearing among men. The keynote of it was struck at the very beginning on that first Christmas morn, when the King came as a helpless child, loaded with disabilities of place and family and position in the world. The stable and the manger and all the other conditions of that birthday of Jesus in Bethlehem are only object-commentaries on the essential feature of his character and work. His life was consistent from the manger to the cross. He was the same Prince of Peace in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem as in his humble entry in Bethlehem.

Only men of spiritual insight could recognize the supremacy of Christ amid all

the signs of weakness and poverty and failure. Jesus, recognized now as he is as Lord and King, has taught the world a new idea of majesty which it is learning, though slowly. True majesty is not seen in pride and haughtiness and insolent force. The disciples all through their intercourse with Jesus felt his moral supremacy. St. Luke, after describing the healing of the demoniac child as the simple fruit of love and compassion, says the effect of it was that they were all astonished at the majesty of God. To them such outpouring of loving, pitiful power was the very majesty of God. And that triumphal entry into Jerusalem was the prelude to the cross.

From the outside view, even the triumph of the moment seemed almost a burlesque, an extravaganza in burlesque imitation of a Roman Triumph, when the successful general rode into the city in the intoxicating pride of conquest. It seemed a mock majesty, this of Jesus, with children and peasants for the serried ranks of soldiers, and branches of trees and cast-off garments for the royal purple; and an ass and the foal of an ass for chariots and horses. It is to the eyes of government only another edition of the stable and the manger, the shabby conditions of a mean lot in life. Yet in the eyes of the wise men there was no place in all the world so worshipful as that stable of Bethlehem; and to all spiritual insight, what can match for pathos and tragedy and greatness of soul that entry into the passion at Jerusalem? It has altered the world's center, altered even the center of mankind's standard of judgment, and taught what the greatness of life really is. And the whole life of Jesus teaches the same lesson, even this moment of seeming triumph just before he tasted what it is for a man to die.

The true King of men is the man of sympathy, the humble-hearted who lives for love. Before that glory all earthly glory pales and fades. All earthly ambitions are mean and poor compared with this divine ambition to serve men and to bless human lives. Love enters into its kingdom, and what a rich kingdom it is!—Condensed from According to My Gospel, by Dr. Hugh Black.

How Jerusalem Received her King. The simple-minded people came streaming out to meet him. The thoughtful, puzzled students, not hostile, with some degree of sympathy, sat at home listening to the tumult and wondering whether it could possibly be that this was "He of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write."

Those whom he had cured of sickness blessed him anew as they heard of his approach. Those who had believed in him felt their faith deepen anew in the people's idol. "Have any of the Pharisees believed on him?" they said over and over to one another. The priests hugged their traditions closer and said, "There is nothing about him here." There were groups of Sadducees who looked with a sort of superior pity upon the whole transaction. They turned aside to let the host sweep by, and then looked after it and shook their heads, with that sort of pity which is at the soul of the intensest pride. The pride that hates is never so intensely supercilious and proud as the pride that pities.

There were those, too, who hated Christ; some people whom he interfered with; some people who felt that they could not live in the same city with him—that either he or they must give way and go out. There were the Pharisees, who saw in Jesus the contradiction of all their most treasured traditions and favorite ideas; and there were the sinners, whom he had rebuked for all their different kinds of sins. The Pharisee said, "If what this Teacher says is true, all that I say is false." The sinner said, "If what this Master commands is right, my life is horrible." Between each of these men and Jesus there was war to the death. One or the other of them must yield or die.

The lordly Romans stalked by superciliously, hardly deigning to glance at the passing procession, only wondering what these absurd, fantastic Hebrews would do next. Each man, according to his nature, answered to the coming of Christ. It was like the judgment day.—Condensed from Sermons for the Church Year, by Phillips Brooks.

Each One Must Decide. Oh, my dear friends, if Christ, as he comes to any one of us to offer us his salvation, never forgets for a moment what we might be in the sight of what we are, and never forgets for a moment what we are in the vision of what we might be; if he always sees our sins in the light of our chances, and our chances against the shadow of our sins, then what Jerusalems we must be to him! He loves us as he loved that city, with a love full of reproach and accusation. He stops as he comes in sight of us, and "beholds the city, and weeps over it." I can think of no picture which so lets me into the very depths of the soul

of Christ as he approaches a soul of man which he longs to save as that which depicts him stopping on the Mount of Olives, where Jerusalem first comes in sight, and beholding the city, and weeping over it.

The city was divided against itself. But through it all Jesus held on his way, claiming the town for his town because it was his Father's. Whether it owned his claim or spurned it, whether it welcomed him or cursed him, through the mixed tumult of its welcome and its curses he went on his way, claiming it all for his own. And so he claims our hearts. An Intruder and a King at once he seems to those hearts as he stands there on their threshold. There is something in every one of them that says to him, "Come in, come in!" There is something, too, in every one of them that rises up at his coming and says, "Begone, begone! We will not have this Man to rule over us." But through their tumult, their struggle, Christ, whether he be King or Intruder, whether he be welcomed or rejected, goes on his way, pressing on into each heart's most secret places, claiming always that he and he alone is the heart's King.

And the struggle in any heart cannot keep on evenly balanced forever. Every heart has to decide. Jerusalem had to decide. Before the week was over she had decided. On Friday she crucified Christ. So must your heart say finally to Jesus, "Come," or "Go." He never will go until you obstinately bid him. He cannot come into the inmost temple until you welcome him.

Do I talk parables? Let me speak as plainly as I can. The moment that you trust Christ's forgiveness, and in profound gratitude give yourself to his service, casting every reluctance and doubt aside, that moment he begins the purification and salvation of your life which shall go on throughout eternity. May some one, may many of you, do that today.—Condensed from Sermons for the Church Year, by Phillips Brooks.

Popularity. On this Sunday Jesus is the most popular person in Jerusalem. Men would follow him and die for him, if he would but give the word. The tide of popularity ebbs, however, as quickly as it flows, and in four days the same people who were crying "Hosanna" are shouting "Crucify him, crucify him," and, as we read, "their voices prevailed."

No one can live long without observing many instances of this tragedy of popularity, the hero of one year forgotten the next, the applause fading into indifference, the popular judgment swayed by the changing wind of gossip or scandal or self-interest. Popularity ebbs and flows like a tide, and the man who is lifted up by it on a wave of self-conceit finds himself of a sudden stranded on the flats of despair.

How, then, does Jesus meet the shifting breezes of popularity? He seems to be absolutely unconcerned about them. He does not know or care how the wind blows. On Palm Sunday, while the shouts of the people are about him, he stands as if alone on the Mount of Olives, and, looking over the valley to Jerusalem, weeps for the sorrows of the city; and on the following Thursday, when the people are crying "Crucify him," again he does not seem to hear them, but goes his way, undisturbed as he was before unflattered, peaceful in blame as in praise, and standing before Pilate as a criminal, says to him, "I am a king." That is the first teaching of Jesus as he approaches this last week of his life.

Many people are tempted to watch for applause or for censure as though they were tests of success. Even in our sports we talk of supporting players by organized noise, as though one could not even play a game at his best without dependence on applause. Yet in our time, as always, there is but one kind of man which in the end wins a worthy victory. It is the man who depends neither on praise nor blame. He leads his life instead of following it. There is but one commendation which he desires—that of his own conscience. He has his Palm Sundays of appreciation, but they do not stir him to self-esteem; he has his Gethsemanes when friends desert him, but they do not depress him to despair. He does his duty and bears his cross; and finally he is remembered, not because he was popular or unpopular, but because he accomplished the work which was given him to do.—Condensed from Mornings in the College Chapel, by Dr. Francis G. Peabody.

For Discussion. 1. The fickleness of human nature.

2. The value of pageants.

3. The twentieth century seems to me to have as its immediate task that man must put Christ on the throne, or perish.—Dr. John A. Hutton.

Questions for Pupils to Think About. 1. Why was it natural for Jesus to

call the righteous, sheep, and the wicked, goats? 2. In the Parable of Dives and Lazarus, what had the rich man done that sent him to the place of torment after death? 3. To a Christian should the thought of the final judgment be terrifying or reassuring? 4. What is our class doing for all those mentioned in verses 35 and 36? 5. Are we each individually doing all we can for the unfortunate?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
MAKING CHRIST OUR KING

Beginning the Lesson. We have reached the last week of Jesus's life. It is Sunday morning, and all Bethany has awakened in pleasant excitement, conscious that their village is the center of observation. For they are housing Jesus of Nazareth, the prophet of God who had raised their townsman Lazarus from the dead. The Passover tents on the hillsides are pouring thousands into the village.

And across the valley in Jerusalem is similar excitement. The pilgrim strangers have caught it from the men of Galilee. The whole race of Israel is represented at the Passover. The city is crowded with strangers. The hill-slopes are covered with tents and encampments. And every one is talking of him. And now, like wildfire, the rumor is running—the caravans through Bethany are spreading it as they come: Jesus of Nazareth is coming to the feast, he who raised Lazarus of Bethany from the dead, he who, the Galileans say, is the Messiah of God!

In humble pageant he rides in from Bethany and his followers as in a dream march exultant beside him, swelling with pride at the popular enthusiasm. The road is lined with crowds as for a royal procession. A shouting multitude is before him and following. Now a larger crowd from the city swarms out to escort him, telling each other of the raising of Lazarus. Every moment the enthusiasm increases. The common road is not good enough for his progress. The Galileans are carpeting the way with their garments. The multitudes are strewing his path with green boughs, and the applauding shouts are audible in Jerusalem itself! "Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the King of Israel who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!"—Dr. J. Paterson-Smyth, in A People's Life of Christ.

Loyalty to Christ our King. There are two books in the Old Testament which are called The First Book of the Kings and The Second Book of the Kings, because they tell the story of the rulers of Israel and of Judah. There are four books in the New Testament which might be called The First, The Second, The Third and The Fourth Book of the Great King, for they tell the story of Jesus Christ the King of Kings. It is these four books, which are taken up with the life and message of our King, which we have now been studying for six months.

More than three hundred years ago Gaspard de Coligny, the Huguenot captain of the Reformation in France, was defending the little town of St. Quentin against the Spaniards. Its ramparts were in ruins, fever and famine raged within, and the terrified people were talking of surrender. One day the Spaniards shot over the wall an arrow bearing a strip of parchment. The writing on the parchment promised to spare the lives and property of the people if they would open the city gates. Coligny took another strip of parchment, wrote on it two words, fixed it to a spear, and flung it over into the camp of the enemy. *Regem habemus*—We have a king—were the two words, and they meant that Coligny had faith in his country to win out, which his loyal soul saw summed up in the person of its sovereign.

We have a King, the King of goodness and truth and love. The King on whom we can always rely, the King to whom we owe our utmost loyalty. We have vowed to fight manfully under his banner: are we doing it? Are we overcoming for his sake our selfishness, pride, bad temper, whatever it is of which he disapproves? Are we doing unto others as we would have them do unto us? Are we loyal to him in word and deed?

The Cross Made out of Palms. On the Sunday before Easter in many churches the boys and girls who come to Sunday-school, and all the people who come to church, are given little crosses to pin on their coats and dresses. These crosses are made of strips of palm leaves.

Palms are used for gladness, and for triumph; and a cross means pain and death. Why should things like palms, which suggest so much that is beautiful, be made into something terrible like a cross? Palms and crosses seem so different that they do not belong together at all.

When we think of Jesus, and think of the palms, we see again the people shouting his name, and crowding around him as though they admired him and loved him better than anyone else in the world. But, presently, something very different happened. People began to find out that Jesus was not going to do the kind of things they had hoped. He was not come as a King, to make everybody rich of a sudden, and everything easy and smooth. He had come to teach the love of God; but men had to be in earnest to listen to him. They were disappointed, and as they were disappointed they began to grow angry. They listened to evil men who wanted to get rid of Jesus. Before many days went by, the same crowd which had gone shouting out to meet him and strewn the palm branches on his road, went roaring into the hall of Pilate, and lifted fierce hands against Jesus, and cried: "Crucify him!" And they went out to Calvary, and looked on with hard eyes as he was crucified.

So there was a real sense in which the palms had changed into the cross. The people seemed to welcome Jesus at first, but it was no real welcome. It was made up of words—very shallow, and very false—which presently changed into hateful deeds. They were glad one day to name his name, but just as glad a few days afterwards to see him put to death.

And is not that the way it is sometimes with people even now? We may seem to welcome Jesus, but perhaps that welcome is not real. We speak his name as though we loved him, and then we turn against him, as though we did not love him at all.

Suppose a boy comes to Sunday-school and learns about Jesus. Perhaps he even joins the church, and stands up before God and the congregation and says that he wants to follow Jesus. Then perhaps the next day he goes to school, and when he is playing baseball he plays it in a mean, unfair way. If he thinks the umpire is not looking, he trips up another boy who is running the bases. He plays like a tough instead of like a gentleman. Or he bullies some small boy who is playing the game with him. Then other boys who look at him may shrug their shoulders. They think to themselves, "Is this all that it means to say you want to be Christ's follower?" What the boy said about the Lord Jesus does not matter very much. The thing that counts is what he does. Really to follow Jesus means courage, and honor, and fairness, and truth. When a boy throws all these things away, he is turning the palms of the fine words he said into the cross of a false betrayal.

Or suppose a girl who has said that she, too, wants to learn to love Christ and to follow him, and in Sunday-school sings the hymns, and looks as glad as the people did who came out of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, goes home and is crabbed and cross. Suppose she is in a bad temper about everything her mother suggests which she does not want to do, and is continually insisting that everybody else should do things for her, and never wants herself to be loving and helpful in all the little things at home which might be done for others. Do you think that Christ can have much pleasure in the palms of the words she said and the hymns she sang in Sunday-school?

But what we have said need not be the end of the story. Palms do not have to change into crosses. We can say we love Jesus, and want to follow him, and mean it altogether. We can be Christians who once having welcomed Jesus into our lives keep him there forever. We can live lives so faithful that we shall be always praising him, and making others look up in expectation because through us Jesus will be coming into their midst along a beautiful way.—Condensed from The Armor of Youth, by W. Russell Bowie.

Sentence Sermon to Remember.

Children of the Heavenly King,
As ye journey, sweetly sing;
Sing your Savior's worthy praise,
Glorious in his works and ways.—Cennick.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In the Parable of the Ten Virgins, what was it that the five foolish virgins had done that shut them out from the feast? 2. What was it they had failed to do which was their undoing? 3. In the Parable of the Talents, for what was the unprofitable servant condemned? 4. In the Parable of the Last Judgment, what have the righteous done? What have they failed to do? 5. How was Paul taught that what he did to others was done to Christ? (Acts 22.4,8.) 6. Read Whittier's poem entitled, "I Was a Stranger and Ye Took Me In."

THE LAST JUDGMENT

GOLDEN TEXT: Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me. Matthew 25.40

LESSON Matthew 25.31-46 DEVOTIONAL READING Ecclesiastes 12.1-8, 13, 14

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 16.27; Luke 4.16-22

MATTHEW 25.31 But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: 32 and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; 33 and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; 36 naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? 38 And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. 46 And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE JUDGMENT, verses 31-33. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory," thus Christ begins his parables of The Judgment. Compare Mt. 24.30; 25.6,19. "Napoleon's last biographer devotes two volumes to the rise of his hero and two volumes to his decline and fall. All the volumes of the life of Jesus record the story of the ascent. He goes on from victory to victory, from glory to glory, and as men's eyes become cleansed and their hearts purified they see with increasing certainty that God has indeed so highly exalted him that some day every knee shall bend to him and every tongue confess that he is King indeed" (Dr. C. E. Jefferson).

"Just as the notes of an organ have all to be attuned in proportion of tone and semi-tone to the central dominant note of the harmonic system, so all life's attitudes and activities must harmonize with the fundamental note of Christ's lordship" (Dr. J. S. Holden).

At the Last Judgment, so Christ's parable declares, he himself will sit on the throne of judgment, and before him will be met all the nations, and he will separate them as the shepherd separates sheep from goats, putting the righteous on his right hand and the unrighteous on his left. "A good judge is the promise of a good judgment. The world will have a good Judge, the wisest, the fairest, the best. On his judgment the world may rely, for his judgments admit of no correction nor improvement."

"You can fancy what was in the Master's mind when he said he would part folk, a day coming, 'as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats.' 'Tis a passing fine way, you see, of picturing what no man of us can explain, try as we will. Ah, they are a heady and quarrelsome stock, these goats. Climbing everywhere—why, sirs, they are like selfishness on legs! All day the shepherd must ward his sheep from them as well as he can, and when folding-time comes he must make sure of shutting them off for the common weal. And that, I take is, is like the judgment. Goat nature must be parted from kindly folk—so my thoughts often run, here where goats are on the hills" (Dr. William Allen Knight).

II. SERVICE FOR OTHERS IS SERVICE FOR CHRIST, verses 34-40. To those on his right hand the Judge will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "The thought of God from the beginning looked towards those who by such conduct would inherit

such reward" (Dr. R. H. Horton). "If there is one thing disturbing to Christian faith in this world it is the apparent prosperity of the wicked. The Psalmist of old shed many tears because of it, and still today there are many who give up church and religion because, as they say, 'People who do not interest themselves in these things get along in life just as well as, and sometimes better than, people who do.'

"As we think of the mystery of iniquity, of the many people at large who ought to be behind the walls of a prison, of the murders that have never been solved, of the cruelties that have never been punished or corrected—how comforting and sustaining it is for our weak faith to hear the Lord Jesus speaking to his own and saying, Be patient just a little while longer. The day is coming—it is not far distant—when these matters shall all be set right, when the world shall know that goodness is better than badness, and that the Christian life is the only life that pays in the end" (Gerhard E. Lenski).

"For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in (I was *herboroules*—harborless—and ye *herborouden*—harbored—me, is Wycliff's Version); naked (poorly clad) and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison, and ye came unto me"

"A poor man served by thee, shall make thee rich,
A sick man helped by thee, shall make thee strong;
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
Of service that thou renderest" (Mrs. Browning).

"The stranger within our gates—his name is legion, and also Cohen, Strobowski, Ananikian, Komkopadous. Uncle Sam will be judged and America's destiny as a nation will be decided according to the way in which the stranger is 'taken in.' Shall the stranger be a menace or a man, a fellow man and a brother?" (Thomas C. Richards).

The righteous are sincerely humble, and they ask when it was that they saw the king in need and helped him. "Wordsworth speaks of the 'little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love' that are 'the best portion of a good man's life.' The acts of kindness were forgotten just because they were instinctive, but, Jesus emphasized the point, they are decisive; they come, as another of his telling phrases suggests, from 'the overflow of the heart,' and they reveal it" (Dr. T. R. Glover). "Verily, I say unto you," solemnly the King answered, "inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

"Unheard, because our ears are dull,
Unseen, because our eyes are dim,
He walks on earth, the Wonderful,
And all good deeds are done to him" (Whittier).

"This ideal of living one's life as unto Christ is in itself an uplift and an inward impulse, for life at best without such ennobling inspiration is apt to degenerate into the material and sordid. To regard life, however, as earthly opportunity for the fulfilment of heavenly obligation is to give it wings wherewith to soar into the clear atmosphere of fellowship with him, and wherewith to speed to the service of the needy and oppressed" (Dr. J. Stuart Holden).

Jesus did not teach that the only question at The Judgment will be whether or not one has been benevolent, nor that only actions count. The deeds mentioned were done "unto Christ," they showed that the doer had a vital, personal relationship to Christ, and "it is personal relation to Christ as acted out in the life that will fix eternal destiny." It is the spirit back of what we do or say that counts. Lives of unselfishness indicate the possession of the Spirit of God, they are the hall-mark of the Christian. "The parable brings real comfort to those whose outlook is depressing and whose circumstances seem to restrict the possibility of their usefulness. To know that little things may be done by us in the same spirit of consecration in which others have accomplished great things lends new hopefulness to the weary and often disheartened worker. It is possible for the loftiest love to be seen shining in beauty in the heart of the lowliest deed, and you may be certain that, whoever fails to recognize it there, he for whom it is intended will not miss it."

"I WAS SICK AND YE VISITED ME"

From a Painting by Gabriel Max

III. THE FATE OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS, verses 41-46. To those on his left hand, the unrighteous, the King will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels." The word here for "hell" is "Gehenna." Gehenna was a field outside the city walls of Jerusalem to which the refuse and garbage of the city were carried and there burned. "It is good that fear should sit as the guardian of the soul, forcing it into wisdom; good that men should carry a threatening shadow in their hearts, under the full sunshine; else how should they learn to sense the right?" (Æschylus).

"For I was hungry and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink." "There are few things on which the New Testament is more severe in its condemnation than uselessness and self-centered living. The sin of doing nothing in a world of clamant need is a sin that is pilloried and branded with the uttermost condemnation of Christ. May we in God's mercy be saved from it!" (Charles Brown).

"How strange it would be if, that day when the Lord shall say to some, 'I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink,' he should point any of us, not to slums or prisoners or to far-off heathen lands as places that had lacked our ministry, but to some lonely heart in our own home! Relationships taken as a matter of course, services never appreciated because they are rendered so constantly, kindnesses accepted as if they were merely duty with no word of love or praise, hearts hungry and thirsty through many a weary day for some expression of affection that never comes—these exist in many of our homes more often than we think" (Dr. J. R. Miller).

But the righteous into eternal life. "If God were not man's friend and anxious to save he would not have sent Jesus Christ into the world in the first place. Because God loves the world he announces the vindication of the righteous and the overthrow of the wicked as he does in the words of Jesus. Because he loves man he sends Jesus Christ to die for the sins of men and to win pardon and eternal peace for all who will receive it by faith."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson. What parable did we study last year which teaches God's love for the sinner? What does John 3.16 tell us?

The Parables of Judgment. Among the words spoken by Jesus on Tuesday of the Last Week are the so-called Parables of Judgment recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. They are the conclusion of a long discourse spoken by Jesus in answer to the question of the disciples, "Tell us, What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

In the parable of the Ten Virgins, it is not what the foolish virgins have done, but what they have failed to do, which shuts them out in the outer darkness. In the parable of the Talents, which follows, it is again neglect which causes the unprofitable servant to be cast into the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth; he has failed to use and increase the talent entrusted to him. In the parable of the Judgment of the Nations, it is for sins of omission that some are sent away into eternal punishment.

The first parable demands vigilance; the second, fidelity; the third, practical service. The thought of all three parables is that this life is preparatory to the next, that duty well done here is the right preparation for eternal blessedness.

We speak of the Parable of the Judgment, for such it is usually called, but in reality it is not a parable. In verse 32 there is a striking simile and in verse 33 a striking metaphor; but the whole is a prophetic picture.

For the Blackboard. *Monday, April 3.* Return to Jerusalem. Cursing the Fig Tree. Cleansing the Temple. Return to Bethany. Conspiracy of Enemies.

Tuesday, April 4. Fig Tree Withered. Jesus's Authority Challenged. Parable of the Two Sons. Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. Parable of the Marriage Feast. Questions about Tribute, the Resurrection, and the Great Commandment. Jesus's Question about the Christ. Woes upon the Scribes and Pharisees. The Widow's Gift Commended. Visit of the Greeks. Discourse about the Destruction of Jerusalem and the End of the World. Parable of the Ten Virgins. Parable of the Talents. Parable of the Judgment. Judas's Bargain with the Chief Priests.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FOR THE LESSON

There are several questions which this picture of the Last Judgment raises in our minds. To discuss them in any class would be futile, for they cannot be solved in this life. We must keep in mind the fact that words cannot describe the life beyond the earthly life, and, moreover, that it was not Christ's purpose in giving this picture of the Last Judgment to portray the Judgment scene nor to describe heaven and hell. His object was threefold: to teach, as Paul says, that "We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ," *for there is a life to come;* that in the future life *the good will be rewarded and the evil punished;* and *that what we do in this life determines what we merit in the future life.*

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

Beginning the Lesson. In the wonderful description of the Last Judgment which Plato gives, he represents God as providing that both the judge and the judged shall be stripped of all the appearances and disguises of this life, and of the body itself, so that the judge with his naked soul shall pierce into the naked souls of those that are brought before him and see their very essence, nothing intervening. This is to be done with absolute impartiality, the judge not knowing whose are the souls brought before him; but, tracing in the scars and prints that mark the soul, the ill-living and selfish cruelty and luxury and insolence which have characterized the life, the judge marks each as curable or incurable, and dispatches each to the reward or punishment deserved.

This has been the instinctive declaration of all thoughtful races. They have uttered their belief in very various forms, but they agree in looking forward to a time when each man shall be known for what he really is, and shall be rewarded according to his deeds.—Dr. Marcus Dods, in Christ and Man.

The Parable of Human Brotherhood. With his unerring judgment Christ foresaw that need, and loss, and selfishness would characterize our common life in all ages. As the Son of man he identified himself with all need, claimed all love, and judged all selfishness. Our common actions have eternal consequences, and Christ labored to show their significances for good or ill. On the one hand, he accepted all service lovingly rendered to the poor, the hungry, the sick, the sad, as offered to himself. On the other hand, he rebuked the selfishness which withholds and withdraws from human need, as being the expression of a hostile attitude toward him. At the same time he lifted just a corner of the veil that hides eternity from our view, and revealed the ultimate issues of both earth's love and selfishness.

That his words should surprise both the rewarded and the rejected is not strange, for neither is conscious of the real weight and worth of doings which become habitual, until they hear him say, "Ye did it unto me," "Ye did it not unto me." And these words are full of illuminating power to us, for they reveal the secret motive and spring of every activity, and assure us of the true and eternal determination of life.—Dr. J. Stuart Holden, in Redeeming Vision.

Are You Prepared for This Judgment? Are you willing to become transparent, that all your imaginings, your desires, the real bent of your disposition may be apparent to all? To what do your thoughts and desires gravitate in your times of unguarded, unconstrained leisure? Is it to things spiritual or to things of the flesh? Which presents itself to you with the greater zest and attractiveness, your own advantage or the growth of good in the world? Christ's self-sacrifice and devotion from first to last to the interests of the whole body of men, his aim in life and spirit, are not what we may or may not adopt as we please. His spirit and aim are the only right spirit and aim, the only test which will be put to us in judgment. We shall not be asked what we have felt or thought or believed or hoped, but what we have done. Have we spent our life in trying to gather comforts round ourselves, or have we, in a wider or narrower sphere as God has appointed, striven to lessen evil of every kind, to remove sin, distress and want?—Dr. Marcus Dods, in Christ and Man.

What God Will Ask. "If God made all men, they are all his children; then why have I been taught all my life that I must be different? Why can't I eat the food others eat, why have I been locked up in a mental jail and been deprived of contact with others who live in my own day, who have the same origin and the

same destiny?" These were the questions which Professor Edward A. Steiner as a young man sought to have answered by his Rabbi. Next he sought out the priest and then the Lutheran minister of his town to have them explain the differences of race and creed amid which he was born. They all failed him, and at length his mother explained by her parable.

Purchasing three packages of cherries in the market she bade her son empty them all together in a large bowl and then sort them over, putting all the good ones in a beautifully decorated bowl in front of him, and casting the bad ones into a very old and ugly bowl under the table. When the good were all separated from the bad, Mr. Steiner says in "The Parable of the Cherries,"—

Mother turned to me and said: "We bought cherries from a Roman Catholic, from a Protestant, and from a Jewess. Can you tell them apart?"

I answered: "No, Mother dear, I cannot."

"The reason you cannot is that there are only two kinds of cherries. No matter from whom we bought them, or what we marked the paper bags, there are just good cherries and bad cherries.

"My son," she continued, "in the great judgment day God will bring all the people together from every country, of every race and religion, just as we have brought together the cherries; and he will not ask, as we approach him, 'Are you a Jew? or are you a Romanist? or are you a Protestant?' and then tell us to go to Heaven or to Gehenna.

"He will open our hearts, as we opened the cherries; the good ones he will keep to be with him, and the bad ones he will cast under his feet."

"Now, my son," she asked, as she embraced and kissed me, "do you understand?"

"Mother," I answered, "you are wiser than the rabbi and the priest and the preacher. I do understand."

Inasmuch as ye Did it Not. "Master, I have this day broken no law of the Ten—have hurt no one. Is it enough?"

"Child, there stood one by thy side burdened with heavy tasks of lowly, earthly labor. For a little help, a little easing of the burden, he looked to thee. Thou hadst time and strength."

"Master, I did not hear."

"Thine ear was dull. There came a guest to seek thy converse, a human friend in quest of fellowship. I marked thy sigh, thy frown. Why was thy heart not glad?"

"I was reading. I hate to be disturbed, to be called from great thoughts to trifling talk."

"The children would have thee some few moments in their play. Without thee they went wrong—how far wrong thou wilt not know. It is too late."

"Child's play? But I was searching for a hidden truth of spiritual import."

"Thou dist not turn aside to lift that lame one who had fallen by the way."

"I was in haste to do what I had planned. I meant to help him when I should return."

"Another lifted him. Shall I question further?"—Unknown.

Guilty.

I never cut my neighbor's throat;
My neighbor's gold I never stole;
I never spoiled his house and land;
But God have mercy on my soul!

For I am haunted night and day
By all the deeds I have not done;
O unattempted loveliness!
O costly valor never won!—Marguerite Wilkinson.

Those who Need not Fear the Judgment. We do not know how soon our life here will be ended. We do not know what the life beyond will be like. We do know that we need not fear the future life if we make Christ our Friend and Guide here; our King whom we love and obey. When the old negro servant of Andrew Jackson was asked, after his master's death, whether he thought the General had gone to Heaven, he replied, "I don't know, marsa, but I reckon if he wanted to go, he went." If we want to inherit the Kingdom prepared for us, we shall so live here that we shall hear the joyful words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father."

For Discussion. Doings versus doctrines. A follower of Christ not only be-

lieves but obeys. His is the gospel of action. "We cannot be servants of Christ without being servants of humanity."

Questions for Pupils to Think About. 1. What did Jesus mean by saying, "This is my body," "This is my blood"? 2. Why is the Sacrament called the Lord's Supper? The Eucharist? The Holy Communion? 3. What significance has the Lord's Supper for you?

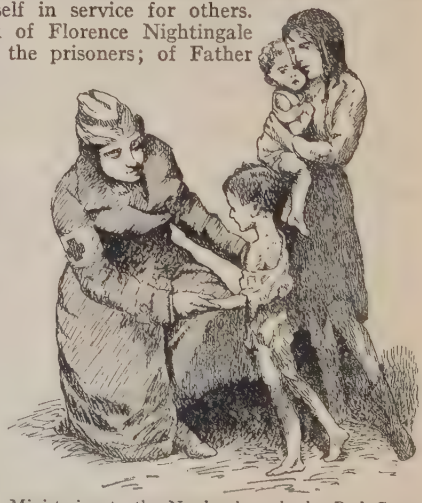
TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
CHRIST'S PICTURE OF THE JUDGMENT

Beginning the Lesson. Lord Shaftesbury was a Christian philanthropist beloved by multitudes. When he died all whom he had helped were anxious to show honor to his memory. When the funeral procession reached Trafalgar Square forty thousand factory workers, flower girls, and other laborers were gathered, and all along the route there were delegates from Sunday-schools, and from the homes and training schools which he had supported.

One delegation carried a banner with the words, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in." Another had a banner bearing the inscription, "I was sick, and ye visited me." The working girls had a silken flag inscribed, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me." Of these beautiful tributes the great philanthropist was worthy. What parable spoken by Jesus did his friends know? Tell the parable.

The Rewards of the Unselfish Life. In his picture of the Judgment Jesus shows us a number of people who were just ordinary folk who did beautiful things. They had their pleasures, of course, and their business, they earned their bread and butter like every one else, but they gave thought to those about them and took the trouble to help those in need. They were men and women of unselfish spirit who lived unselfish lives. Their great aim was to make others happy.

That was the life Jesus lived. When he preached in the synagogue at Nazareth he said he had come to look after the poor, the captive, the blind, the bruised. All the time he was on earth he spent himself in service for others. Other people have done this, too. Think of Florence Nightingale and the wounded; of John Howard and the prisoners; of Father Damien and the lepers. But no one has done what Jesus did. And the unselfish life he chose and lived is the finest example for our lives.



Ministering to the Needy through the Red Cross
From a painting by a Belgian Artist,
J. Paul Verrees

You must not think that it was easy to do so much for others as did the men and women of whom Jesus here speaks. If they had done their ministry only when they felt like it, they might have found it easy, but they did it constantly, and there were times when it was hard to be unselfish, when there were difficulties in the way, when the sick and hungry were fault-finding and disagreeable, when they themselves were sick and weary. Why did they do it? Listen to Jesus: he tells us that he was anointed, sent, for that work and life. He did it not only because his heart was in it, but because he believed it was God's will and purpose for him. And that is what all these people felt. They believed that only by helping others could they please God and do his will.

Though the unselfish life is hard, it has great rewards. The gratitude of those one has helped is a reward, but the great reward comes when life is over and one receives the approval of God, hears the King say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you."

Our Golden Text. There are many legends about persons having given or having withheld aid to the poor and then suddenly learning that the applicant was the Christ. These legends are based upon our Golden Text: what is it?

One of the most beautiful of these legends is told in Lowell's Vision of Sir Launfal. The Grail was the cup out of which the wine was drunk at the Last Supper, brought to Britain by Jospeh of Arimathea, so the legend says, and carefully guarded by holy knights, but lost because of the unholy thoughts of one of its keepers. Sir Launfal sets out to find it. At the beginning of his search he meets a leper and, shocked by his loathsomeness, he scornfully hurls him a gold piece and hastens onward. Years pass. In his old age, unsuccessful in his quest, he returns to his castle and there at his own gate he hears a beggar's cry. Looking down he sees "the gruesome thing," the leper. He does not turn from him in loathing now. Instead he says:

I behold in thee
An image of him who died on the tree;
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,
Thou also hast had the world's buffet and scorns,
And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in his hands and feet and side:
Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;
Behold, through him, I give to thee.

And then Sir Launfal recalls "in what a haughtier guise he had flung an alms" to a leper as he started forth on his long search. His moldy crust of bread and water from the nearby stream he shares with the leper. Suddenly,

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast face,
A light shone round about the place;
The leper no longer crouched at his side,
But stood before him glorified,
Shining and tall and fair and straight
As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful Gate—
Himself the Gate whereby men can
Enter the temple of God in man.

And these are the words that greeted him:—

In many climes, without avail,
Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;
Behold it is here,—this cup which thou
Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now;
This crust is my body broken for thee,
This water his blood that died on the tree;
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need;
Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me.

Inherit the Kingdom Prepared for You. A lady who was very rich dreamed that God called her up to Heaven and that she was going through the streets of the glorious city, a guide with her to show her the way. She noticed a very fine mansion being built.

She said to her guide, "Whose is that?" I think she must have felt that she would like it for her own. And she was very much surprised when the guide answered, "That is for your gardener." "For my gardener!" she exclaimed; "why, he never lived in a mansion on earth; he lived in a little bit of a house. He might have had a finer home if he hadn't given away so much."

The guide said nothing in reply, and they went on. Soon they came to a plain-looking house. There was nothing mean about it, for there is nothing mean in Heaven. But it was not nearly so beautiful and attractive as the other. The lady said, "Whose is this?" And the guide answered, "This is for you." "For me?" she said; "why, I always lived in an elegant mansion on earth." "Yes, I know," the guide said, and he added sadly, "but the Great King of Heaven is doing the best he can with the material that you sent up."—Frank T. Bailey, in "Little Ten Minutes."

How the Cobbler Received Christ. Do you know Tolstoy's story entitled, "Where Love Is, there God Is also"? It is so beautiful and so applicable to our lesson that I wish there were space to repeat it all here.

Martin Avydeeich, the cobbler, is the hero. He lived in a cellar which had one window through which he could see the boots of the passers-by. One day as Martin was dozing he heard his name called. "Who's there?" he asked as he started up from his nap. He saw no one. Again he dozed off. Suddenly he heard quite plainly these words: "Martin, Martin! Look tomorrow into the street. I am coming."

The next day Avydeeich kept thinking about Christ's coming to him. His thoughts were divided. He thought at one time that he must have been dozing when he heard these words, and then again he thought he really must have heard that voice. Looking out of his window he saw Stepanuich sweeping off the snow. "The old man is much broken," thought Avydeeich to himself. "It is quite plain that he has scarcely strength enough to scrape away the snow. Suppose I made him drink a little tea!"

"Come in and warm yourself a little," he cried a moment later. "You're a bit chilled, eh?"

"Christ requite you! Yes, and all my bones ache, too," said Stepanuich.

"Here, take a cup of tea. Have some more. 'Twill do thee good." And then Martin told his guest of the words he had heard the night before, and talked with him about Jesus and his words.

"I thank thee, Martin Avydeeich," said Stepanuich as he went back to his shoveling. "I have fared well at thy hands, and thou hast refreshed me both in body and soul."

After awhile Martin saw a stranger, a poorly clad woman, leaning up against the wall and trying to wrap up a crying child. Martin went to the door and called, "Come inside! In the warm room thou wilt be better able to attend him. This way!" The amazed woman followed him into his room. Then he warmed up some cabbage soup for her, gave her a jacket to wrap her baby in, and some money with which to get back her shawl which she had pawned.

"Christ requite thee, dear little father. It is plain that it was he who sent me by thy window. And he it was who made thee look out of the window and have compassion on wretched me." With these words the poor woman went on her way warmed and fed and comforted.

Others, too, Martin helped that day. And when night came and he was reading from his Bible he thought once more upon his dream. Glancing around he saw in the corner the face of Stepanuich. "'Tis I," cried the voice. "Lo, 'tis I!" "It is I," again the voice cried as a woman with a little child stepped from the corner. "And it is I," cried the voice, as other faces appeared.

And the heart of Avydeeich was glad. He opened his book and read: "And I was hungry and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me in. Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." And Avydeeich understood that his dream had not deceived him, and that the Savior had really come to him that day, and he had really received him.

Worth Pondering. Brave Jeanie Deans was right when she said: "When the hour of trouble comes to the mind or to the body, and when the hour of death comes, that comes to high and low, then it isna what we hae dune for oursells, but what we hae dune for others, that we think on maist pleasantly."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. The greatest thing a man can do for his Heavenly Father is to be kind to some of his other children.—Henry Drummond.

A wrong-doer is often a man that has left something undone, and not always a man that has done something.—Marcus Aurelius.

Every kindness done to others is a step nearer to the life of Christ.—Dean Stanley.

The glory is not in the task, but in the doing it for him.—Jean Ingelow.

He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.—John.

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see,
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for thee.—George Herbert.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does the word *sacrament* mean? 2. How many sacraments does our church observe? 3. Did Jesus bid us celebrate his birth? 4. Why do we? 5. Why did he bid us celebrate his death? 6. Do we?

LESSON III—JANUARY 18

THE LORD'S SUPPER

GOLDEN TEXT: This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Luke 22.19

LESSON Luke 22.7-30 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 22.22-28

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 26.17-30; Mark 14.12-26; John 13.1-30

LUKE 22.14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the apostles with him. 15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: 16 for I say unto you, I shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. 17 And he received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: 18 for I say unto you, I shall not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, *even* that which is poured out for you. 21 But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. 22 For the Son of man indeed goeth, as it hath been determined: but woe unto that man through whom he is betrayed! 23 And they began to question among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. PRELUDE TO THE LORD'S SUPPER, verses 14-18. When the hour was come, or, as Matthew says, When even was come, Jesus and his disciples sat down (reclined on couches) to partake of the Paschal Supper. "Greatly have I longed (with desire have I desired) to eat this Passover with you before I suffer," he told them. Why? *For his own sake.* There was comfort to his own heart that he should be able to manifest his love. With tender, solemn thought he had looked forward to it, and he desired the support of their fellowship for what lay before him. *For their sake also.* The final act of suffering would be a great trial to the disciples. They were to know something of the sorrow of desolation, and Christ was eager to prepare them for the dark future. If they were assured of his deathless love they would find comfort when the shock of his death came. They could look back on this feast and on these words, and gather strength to suffer and to wait. And so it is for us also who are his disciples. Our feast of love not only represents the desire of the Lord to give himself, but represents the joy of the gift to us.

"If the Savior with desire desires to eat this Passover with us, shall there be no corresponding desire in our hearts? Will there be no answering response? It is all he asks for—desire. If we come humbly because we need, because we want, because we desire, he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him. It is not only that he gives gracious gifts for our need in sorrow or temptation or sin, and not only that he gives love, but also that he gives himself" (Hugh Black).

For I say unto you, I shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. "That is, until the true Passover has been offered by my death, and so the new kingdom established" (Dr. F. W. Farrar): thus he expressed his conviction that his earthly life was almost over.

Jesus received a cup, seemingly that used at the Passover Feast, for later, in verse 20, we are told of his use of the cup in the rite which we call the Lord's Supper. "The mention of two cups by St. Luke was early felt to be a difficulty, and accordingly a few ancient manuscripts reduce the cups to one, some by omitting the former cup, others by omitting the latter. If the words of verse eighteen are in their true position they seem to show that Jesus did not himself drink of the cup of the Eucharist. Matthew and Mark, however, place them *after* the blessing of the Eucharistic cup, instead of before it" (Dummelow). Upon receiving the cup Jesus gave thanks. For what did he have to be thankful at this last meal with his beloved followers? "His career was about to close ignominiously, his work ending in seeming failure, and no one was so much aware of this as himself. Doubtless he was grateful for the fellowship of these men who had followed him more or less enthusiastically for three years; and we have a right to suppose that the supreme occasion for thanksgiving lay in the fact that he had ideals worth dying for.

"For what shall we be thankful when we partake of the Communion, even though it may be for us, as for Jesus, a bitter hour? We should be grateful for many things, doubtless, but chiefly for Jesus Christ himself. It was his own injunction that his disciples should eat this meal in remembrance of him, and whenever we remember him, we have reason enough for thanksgiving" (Beebe).

Then Jesus reminded them that this was the last time he should partake with them of the Paschal wine: "I shall not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come."

II. THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, verses 19, 20. Jesus took the unleavened bread, especially prepared for the Paschal meal, and gave thanks. From the Greek word, *eucharistesas,* thanks, has come our word *Eucharist:* and because Paul says in First Corinthians (10.16), "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?" the sacrament is also called *Communion.* The bread, which was in the form of hard, flat, round cakes, Jesus broke and gave to his disciples, saying, "This is my body which is given for you." By saying "This is my body" he meant "This represents my body," just as we say of a photograph, "This is my friend," when we mean "This represents my friend." Recall Christ's words in which he declares himself to be "the light," "the door," etc.

"The connection between Christ and us must be of the closest possible kind; so close that the assimilation of the food we eat is not too strong a figure to express it. The food we eat becomes our blood and flesh; it becomes our life, our self. And it does so by our eating it, not by our talking of it, not by our looking at it and admiring its nutritive properties, but only by eating it. And whatever process can make Christ entirely ours, and help us to assimilate all that is in him, this process we are to use." "You get nothing at the table of the Lord that you do not get in the preaching of the Gospel, but you get it pictorially and sacramentally; it is not spoken; it is seen and handled; and that is why it is so powerful to quicken believers into joy and peace. Who can look upon the broken bread without seeing again that body that was broken? And Christ comes near to us, and he is dying for your sins and mine" (G. H. Morrison).

This do in remembrance of me. As a Supper the rite proclaims the social character of Christianity, the fellowship of Christians with one another; as the Holy Communion it proclaims Christ's fellowship with us; as the Eucharist it testifies to our thanksgiving for God's gift of his Son; and as a Sacrament it is our pledge of faithfulness to Christ our Redeemer and Lord.

"If you shrink from all use of form and symbol, consider whether you are not called upon here by common courtesy toward God and your fellow-Christians to use these accepted symbols of the church's unity. On the other hand, if you delight in symbols, beware how you elaborate the form of the sacraments or speak of them as though they were ends in themselves. They are means of grace, not ends" (E. M. Chapman).

And Jesus took the cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you"; that is, "The wine in the cup symbolizes self-sacrifice, which effects and seals the new covenant." Christ gave his whole life to the world, and he gave up his life for the world: he went *Jusqu'au bout,* to the limit, he held nothing back. As Moses sprinkled blood upon the people he said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which Jehovah hath made with you"; so here Jesus declared that his blood is poured out to ratify a covenant: the graphic present—is poured out—is used, for the sacrificial death is close at hand.

III. THE PRESENCE OF THE TRAITOR ANNOUNCED, verses 21-23. Matthew and Mark separate the Passover from the institution of the Lord's Supper by the prediction of the betrayal. Luke records this at the close. It was a startling statement that Jesus made when he said, "But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table." "It was the dropping of a Lyddite shell into their midst, destroying the whole atmosphere of peace" (Dean Brown). "For the Son of man indeed goeth, as it hath been determined," continued Jesus: "But woe unto that man through whom he is betrayed!" Matthew records the further saying, "Good were it for that man if he had not been born." Excitement, consternation, horror must have been portrayed on their faces as they all began to question among

themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. "And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him every one, Is it I, Lord?" is Matthew's version.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What did we learn last year about the Passover? Describe the first Passover.

The Time and Place of the Last Supper. While the city of Jerusalem was making ready to celebrate the Passover Supper, and the chief priests and elders were laying their plans to compass the death of Jesus, Jesus bade his disciples prepare for their celebration of the Passover at the house of a friend where they would be safe from interruption. The place was an upper room, according to tradition the one where the disciples afterwards met on the Day of Pentecost. The time of the meeting, according to the Synoptists, was after sunset on Thursday, the evening before the crucifixion.

The Traditional Upper Room

For the Blackboard. *Wednesday, April 5.* No Events Recorded.

Thursday, April 6. Return to Jerusalem and Preparation for the Passover Feast. The Feast Held in the Upper Room in the Evening. Strife as to Who was Greatest. Washing Disciples' Feet. Announcement of Betrayal. Probable Departure of Judas. Institution of the Lord's Supper. Prediction of Peter's Denial. Farewell Discourse and Intercessory Prayer. Departure at Midnight for Gethsemane.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

A child may be led to the Communion long before he can comprehend its depth of meaning; nevertheless, he will receive that which in our day children very much need, an impression of something very solemn and sacred, which words alone may fail to convey.

Careful preparation must be made for it. Entered upon off-hand, it may not be an actual injury; but it will, at least, fail of its total possibility.

The service may be placed before the class by the teacher as the assent of the mind to love for Jesus Christ. The promise to observe it in this spirit may then be sought, and in most cases can be obtained. Experience has shown that not more than one scholar in ten is unwilling to give this assent.

The nature of the Communion need not be elaborately explained; but at least it

may be shown that by this act we "remember Jesus Christ" in gratitude for his love to us and of his death for us. That thought expressed by the child in this concrete form is as solemn, as intelligent, as meaningful as any expression that is ever gained from a child in an evangelistic service.

This object kept before the class for a few Sundays in advance by an earnest teacher will have prepared the children to put themselves entirely into the act when the time comes.

When the day arrives for the service, let seats be reserved for pupils by classes, where they may sit with their teachers. The grip of class unity and unanimity may be used lawfully to aid the one who is reluctant or inadequately enlisted.

The service will quicken the hopes of the older members of the church. It is an illustration, which we too seldom see, of the young life coming to renew and energize the life of the church, which otherwise will soon fade away. It can easily be the great day of the year in the spiritual history of the church.—Condensed from an article in The Sunday School Journal, by W. Arter Wright.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
COMMUNION WITH JESUS CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer," were the first words of Jesus as he sat down to that last Paschal meal with his disciples. "Such great love had not up to this moment been expressed by any words of Christ to his friends," writes Giovanni Papini, in his Life of Christ. "They knew that he loved them; but until this evening their poor bruised hearts had not felt how poignant his love was. He knew that this evening was the last respite of rest and cheer before his death, and yet he had desired it ardently as though it were a boon, with that fervor which is the mark of passionate souls, souls on fire, loving souls, those who battle for the love of victory, who endure all things for a high prize.

"These thirteen men had apparently come together to perform the old social rite of the liberation of their people from Egyptian slavery. They seemed to be thirteen devout men of the people, waiting about a white table redolent of roasted lamb and wine, for the signal to begin an intimate and festal supper.

"But this was only in appearance. In reality it was a vigil of leave-taking and separation. Two of these thirteen, he into whom God had entered and he into whom Satan had entered, were to die terrible deaths before the next nightfall. The very next day the others were to be dispersed, like reapers at the first downfall of hail.

"But this supper which was the *viaticum* of an ending, was also a wonderful beginning. In the midst of these thirteen Jews the observance of the Jewish Passover was about to be transfigured into something incomparably higher and more universal, into something unequaled and ineffable; into the greatest Christian mystery. The simple eating of bread was to become actual communion with God."

The Dominant Idea of the Lord's Supper is Fellowship. It is through a real fellowship of spirit with Christ, a reproduction in themselves of his grace, that the disciples will create his Church; and of the intimacy of this fellowship the shared bread and wine are the sacred symbols.

Now fellowship and discipleship are two very different things. Discipleship deals with ideas, fellowship with tempers. Discipleship is a matter of creed, fellowship of spirit and life. For example, in a large sense it may be claimed that every enlightened mind in the civilised world today owes allegiance to the ideas of Jesus. We are all his disciples. Millions of persons, very far removed from the churches, will admit that the ideas of Jesus are vital and pregnant, and to this extent such persons are his disciples. But how many of them know fellowship, strive to reproduce Christ's life in their own, have any real sense of intimate communion and realize Christ as a personal Savior?

Thus, when John Stuart Mill said that for the ordinary conduct of life there was no better guide than the Sermon on the Mount, he was a disciple. It is not surprising that his superb intelligence recognized the value of the ideas of Jesus; as a great thinker he could not refuse that tribute. But when Paul says: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," he uses a very different language. Here is emotion, love, surrender, the passion which transfuses and transforms character. It is not the ideas of Christ which fascinate Paul; it is Christ himself, and so he characteristically says that he knows not what he has believed, but whom he has believed. That is fellowship; he knows the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and has wholly surrendered his

life to the sway of Christ's will. And that is what the Lord's Supper implies—fellowship in spirit and life wtih a personal Savior, which is a much rarer thing than the most sincere discipleship.—From a Sermon by Dr. W. J. Dawson.

The Meaning of the Communion Service. The Holy Communion has always appealed to the religious imagination of Christians as being a particularly beautiful symbol of that fellowship which all followers of Christ should have with each other, the kind of fellowship which we enjoy with those people whom we invite to dine with us often just because we like to be with them.

In one of the prayers of our Communion Service the petition is made that we may so eat the body and drink the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ *"that we may live and grow thereby."* Important as human fellowship is to our highest welfare, divine fellowship is even more important. There come times when the sympathy and companionship of friends fail us. We never reach the time when a living faith in Jesus Christ and the sense of his presence cannot help us. In this meal the Host offers himself as the food which is eaten by his guests. "Eat of my body," "Drink of my blood," "Be nourished by the sacrifice which I make of myself in your behalf," "Feed on me"—these are the great words of Jesus wherever the Communion is administered. The idea, of course, is simply that Christ gives himself to us in the hours of intimate communion with him in some such way as every true friend gives himself to another, and we are refreshed.

Another petition in one of the prayers always used when this sacrament is administered is that we may "take this Holy Communion to our comfort." This prayer is answered in the life of every one who, in receiving the sacrament, has a vivid sense of fellowship with Christ, and who finds the irritations of life growing less, the frictions reduced, and the strain slackened as the result of his communion.

Roman soldiers were required as far as possible to return to Rome once a year and there renew their pledge of allegiance to their emperor and supreme commander. So Christians come very often to the table of their Lord renewing their vows of loyalty and obedience to him. To what do we pledge ourselves? In the familiar words of the invitation to the Communion, "to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking from henceforth in his holy ways."—Condensed from an article in The Zion's Herald, by Dr. James A. Beebe.

Who May Partake of the Lord's Supper. How much unworthiness in those disciples! Skeptical Thomas; Peter, rash and weak; John with his passion; and all of them with a spot of cowardice in their hearts which was so soon to blacken in the fierce light which beat upon them! But the Master, looking beyond their faults and regarding the bright possibilities of each, invited them to this closest fellowship. "And they all drank of it." So let it be now. If Christ received only perfect ones at his table, he would sit there alone; but he receives sincere souls, whatever may be their faults. In need of comfort, of faith, of purity, and peace, of all that Christ can give so richly and waits to give so freely, let us not refuse the Master's welcome. When David's place was vacant at the royal table, Saul said, "Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor today?" So when we absent ourselves from the Lord's table, a more gracious King than Israel's marks our empty place.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson, in Mistaken Signs.

Our Need of Communion with Jesus Christ. If a friend is the one who summons us to our best, then is not Jesus Christ our best Friend, and should we not think of the Communion as one of his chief appeals to us to be our best? The Lord's Supper looks not back to our past with a critical eye, but to our future with a hopeful one. The Master appeals from what we have been to what we may be. He bids us come, not because he sees we are better than we have been, but because he wants us to be. To stay away because our hearts are cold is to refuse to go to the fire till we are warm.—Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock.

We have sore need of that Upper Room. The complexity of business life loads the man of affairs with problems in such a way as to almost banish the mood for devotion. The ceaseless round of social gaieties becomes for many a woman a large house all on the ground floor with no rooms abutting on the sky. The elaborate courses of study in high school and college with a hundred other interests on the side often militate against the growth of a definite, clear-cut Christian life for the student. We have constant need of that Upper Room as a place of spiritual privilege.—Dr. Charles R. Brown.

The Proof of the Value to us of the Communion. We can not always sit at the Communion table. We partake of the feast not so much as a luxury—though it

is that—but to give us strength to work. We think our Sabbath services, our prayers, our Bible reading, are our religion. It is not so. We do these things to help us to be religious in other things. These are the mere meals, and a workman gets no wages for his meals: it is for the work he does. The value of this Communion is not estimated yet. It will take the coming week to put the value upon it. In itself it counts little; we shall see what it is, by what we shall be.—Henry Drummond.

As we Draw near to Christ we Draw near to One Another. Dr. Trumbull Backus used to say that he always knew as he looked over the report of the church treasurer on what days the Communion services had fallen by the size of the missionary offering. Invariably whenever the offering fell on a Communion Sunday the missionary offerings were from twenty-five to fifty per cent greater than on any other day. On the days that the people drew nearest to Jesus, when their hearts were melted and tender with his love, on these days they drew near also to the uttermost parts of the earth. What draws us close to one another at any time is the fact that each one of us is drawn close to our Lord.—Dr. Robert E. Speer, in The Master of the Heart.

For Discussion. 1. The virtue of a rite depends not opon the act but upon the spirit back of the act. "It is most important that we should not think more of the sacrament than of the Lord of the sacrament, and it is most important that the sacrament be received as the instrument of an ethical relationship and not as the substitute for it."

2. The help which the Lord's Supper is to the spiritual life.

3. Who may partake of the Communion Service?

Questions to Think About. 1. Find seven reasons given in the fourteenth chapter of John why the disciples should not be troubled. 2. To what does Christ refer in his coming again, verse 3? 3. Why was Jesus right when he said, "Whither I go ye know the way" and Philip wrong when he disclaimed the knowledge? 4. When was Philip willing to die for the faith which he had? 5. What did Jesus mean by verse 12? What "greater works" are being done today through his followers? 6. Do verses thirteen and fourteen mean that all prayers will be answered? 7. Is there any limitation to the kind of prayer it is right to offer?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE MEANING OF THE COMMUNION SERVICE

Beginning the Lesson. On October 27, 1919, we celebrated our first "Roosevelt Day": why? Throughout the length and breadth of our land people met in halls and churches and schools and recalled some of the things which he did and said while he was yet with us. Ex-President Roosevelt had many bitter enemies, many hostile political opponents, but probably not one among them all today would hesitate to acknowledge that from his life many useful lessons may be drawn which we need to keep in mind. His example, his vital American spirit, the world would be poorer to have missed, and would be poorer ever to forget.

In all our churches at stated intervals, on the first Sunday of the month or of each Quarter, sometimes even oftener, those who know and love the greatest Leader the world has ever known or ever will know, meet to keep in remembrance his life and death and resurrection. Reverently let us question why.

The Meaning of the Lord's Supper. See the preceding Topic.

Lessons from the Lord's Supper. You know how bread is made. Grains of wheat are put in the ground by the farmer, and these grains give up their lives in order that other grains may grow on the stalk at harvest time. Then these grains are gathered in, and finally ground into flour. Christ also gave up his life just as those first grains of wheat in the ground. And he meant to tell us by the bread at Communion that if we are to help other people we must first be willing to give up our own selfish desires for their sake.

By the wine at Communion Christ meant to teach us that just as the branch of a grapevine must be attached to the stalk before there can be grapes, so you and I must keep close to Christ in order to be able to live the life of unselfishness which shows that we are his followers. He says: "I am the vine, ye are the branches. Without me ye can do nothing."

After Christ's death, whenever the disciples took their meal together, they would think of Christ, and they would forgive one another and become more gentle and

loving. Whenever we see the Communion table prepared, we also must think of Christ, forgive those who have wronged us, and try still harder to be unselfish and kind.—Howard J. Chidley.

Why We Need the Communion Service as a Reminder of Jesus. "Sometimes I'm afraid I'm not a Christian at all," the boy said doggedly. "I thought I was when I joined the church, but I don't seem to have the same interest somehow. It isn't easy for me to remember God—to think about him a hundred times a day, as I feel sure a Christian ought to do."

"I am thinking about the time your father was away from home so long—on that business trip in the West." The minister spoke slowly, looking away toward the blue hills. "There was nearly a year you didn't see him, I think. Was it hard for you to remember him?"

"Not a bit." There was no uncertainty in the frank reply. "I don't suppose I thought of him as often as I do when he's in and out every few hours in the day—that is, after the first, when we all missed him so much. But we had letters every week, and of course we talked about him—mother and the girls, and all of us—and kept looking forward to the time when he'd come home. No, there wasn't much chance to forget him."

"Suppose there had been no letters, Harry? Suppose your father's name had been dropped in conversation? Suppose—"

"It would have made a difference," the other broke in eagerly. "The house would have been there, though, and the things father had given us. They'd have kept him in mind—for a time, at least. I don't know how it would have been after he had been away years and years."

"We can't see God," said the minister, after a thoughtful pause. "He is very near us, but until we have keener eyes than we have now, we must take that on trust. It isn't to be wondered at that we forget God when so many other things that we can see and touch and feel crowd in upon us. No doubt our Heavenly Father took all that into account when he gave us his Holy Word—something like your father's weekly letters—and his house, where the members of his family could meet and talk about him. I believe that's what the Bible and the church ought to mean to us, Harry."

"I didn't stay to Communion the last time," the boy admitted, dropping his eyes. "I see what you mean, and it's right, too. We had two cousins visiting that day, and they—well, they weren't at all that sort. I've missed a good many other Sundays, too; and this summer has been such a rush that my Bible reading has gone by pretty often. A fellow needs all the reminders of God he can have in a world like this."

"He certainly does, Harry," said the minister, smiling. "I fancy you're on the right track."—The Youth's Companion.

A Prayer to Offer at the Lord's Table. O Almighty God, who dost put into our minds good desires and dost give us grace and strength to bring them to good effect, help me in my weakness and failure and penitence with thy mighty power; enable me now to begin again another and better life, wherein by thought and word and deed I may please thee; and fill my heart anew with love for thee and for all men; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—Dr. George Hodges.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

The feast is spread, the Master bids you come,
For all is ready, and he waits to bless.—Andrew McClintock.

He who feeds on Christ becomes Christlike.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—John.

"In memory of the Savior's love,
We keep the sacred feast,
Where every humble, contrite heart
Is made a welcome guest."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did Jesus mean by "my Father's house," verse 2? 2. What did Jesus say about Heaven in Jn. 14.2, 3? 3. What descriptive adjective is often applied to Thomas? 4. On what other occasion did he express doubt? (Jn. 20.24.) 5. What do these verses tell us about Philip: Jn. 1.43-36; 6.7; 12.21? 6. Commit to memory verses 1-3, 6, 11 and 15.

JESUS COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES

GOLDEN TEXT: I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14.6

LESSON John 14.1-31 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 20

REFERENCE MATERIAL Luke 24.49; John 7.37-39; 15.26, 27; 16.5-15

JOHN 14 Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also. 4 And whither I go, ye know the way. 5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me. 7 If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father? 10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. 12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do. 15 If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, 17 *even* the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE REUNION OF CHRIST AND HIS FOLLOWERS, verses 1-3. Dumb in their astonishment, agitation, and sorrow, the eleven disciples sat looking at their Master in that upper room in Jerusalem late on Thursday evening of Holy Week. He has told them that one of them will betray him, that one of them will deny him, and that he is going where they cannot follow him. In this crisis he tries to comfort them. "Let not your heart be troubled," tenderly he counsels them; "believe in God, believe also in me." "Trust him who overrules all events for which you feel yourselves incompetent; or, if in your present circumstances that faith is too difficult, trust me whom you see and know and whose word you cannot doubt" (Expositor's Greek Testament).

In spite of everything the disciples must trust in the goodness of God and in their Lord's own loving thought of them. Faith is still the cure for heart-trouble, the sure reliance in anxious moments. Not a nominal faith in the existence of God, but an active, overmastering belief in his goodness and wisdom and in his overruling all things for good, is the faith that will keep the heart from despair in times of danger and dread.

Separation was at hand, but there would be a reunion. By going away Jesus would make ready for his followers abiding places in his Father's house. Our word *mansion* meant originally merely a place of shelter, and accordingly the margin of The Revised Version gives the rendering "abiding places." "It is not in Heaven that one finds God, but in God one finds Heaven": in the "Father's house" one is in Heaven because in the presence of the Father and in the enjoyment of his love and favor.

At death we go out of one home into another far more beautiful. In speaking of his own death, Jesus said, "I go away," "I go to the Father." So Paul said, "The time of my departure is at hand." They were like travelers setting out on a journey to a definite and far-away place. And let us not think, "I am going to die," but rather, "I am going to set forth on a journey that ends at the Father's house."

"If it were not so, I would have told you," that your hopes for the future life might not be without foundation. See "The Implications," under the Third Topic. "I go to prepare a place for you."

"No force divine compels. For him who shares
Christ's way, for him alone
The Christ of Calvary a place prepares.
Iscariot makes his own" (John Elliot Bowman).

As there is no uncertainty about his going, so there is none about his coming (see verses 18 and 28): "I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." See Jn. 17.24. "The promise is fulfilled in the death of the Christian, and it has changed the aspect of death. The personal second coming of Christ is not a frequent theme in this Gospel" (Expositor's Greek Testament). "'I come again' refers not so much to his coming at the end of the world, or in great crises of history, or at the death of believers, as to the progressive influence of the Holy Spirit in his church, preparing the way for the final and completed union of Christ and his people which is predicted in the succeeding part of the verse" (New Century Bible).

II. CHRIST IS THE PERSONAL REVELATION OF THE FATHER, verses 4-11. "And whither I go, ye know the way," continued Jesus, but Thomas interrupted him with, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?" "Thomas was one of those men who always keep well within the limits of their knowledge. Some would be silent; some try to believe they knew what Christ said they knew; some doubtful, but afraid to confess it. It is always well to have a Thomas, who speaks for others bluntly what others would fain express" (Dr. George Reith).

"'No, we do not,' Thomas said. It was like him. 'He would die for a faith which he had, John 11.16, but he would not profess a faith which he had not.' He did not know where Jesus was going. How could he know the way? That is our human difficulty. We don't see the end of the way, therefore we don't know the way. But God's plan is to lead us step by step, not to flash light ahead clear to the end of the way" (Dr. Robert E. Speer).

"I am going to the Father," Jesus patiently explained to his dull pupil: "and I am the Way"—the Way to the Father as the goal; "and the Truth"—the true Revealer of the Father; "and the Life"—the source of the life that cannot die. Note that Jesus does not mean that he is first the way, then the truth, and then the life. The words "truth" and "life" explain in what sense he is the way: he is the way to God because he is the truth about God and he is the life from God.

"Without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living: I am the Way which thou shouldest pursue; the Truth which thou shouldest believe; the Life which thou shouldest hope for" (Thomas à Kempis).

"Between 400 and 500 B.C. God gave a great gift to China through the teachings of Confucius. They did give China some truth, light and help; but after we have said the last word about the greatness of Confucius or the value of Confucianism it remains true that he could not stand before mankind and say, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life,' and 'Follow thou me.' The best he could say—indeed, what he did say—was, 'Do as I tell you, not do as I do.' But Jesus boldly stands before the race and says: 'I am the Way to life; I am the Truth about life. Follow thou me, and you shall find the abundant life'" (D. L. Ritchie).

"If you had really known me, had apprehended me, had realized my divinity, you would have known that I and the Father are One, and would therefore have known the Father," said Jesus. Thereupon Philip in his turn interrupted his Lord: he wanted sight, not faith, and he asked to be shown the Father.

Surprised and pained at Philip's question, Christ replied: "Can it be that I have been so long with you, and yet you do not really know me, do not know that in me you have seen the Father, that my words and works are the Father's? Believe that I and the Father are One because of my words alone, but if you cannot do this, believe because of my life and works which prove this."

"Is there a God? How can I be sure that he is? What does he feel toward us? These are questions which men persistently ask, and wait for the reply, but the Master gave the only satisfactory answer that has ever been uttered in the hearing of mankind, when he said in effect, 'The knowledge of God must be conveyed, not in words or books, in symbols or types, but in a life. To know me, to believe in me, to come into contact with me, is to know the deepest heart of God" (Dr. B. F. Meyer).

"Do you know Christ as a man knows his friend, or do you know him as you

know about Julius Cæsar? Do you know Christ because you live with him and he with you, or do you know about him in that fashion in which a man in a great city knows about his neighbor across the street, who has lived beside him for five and twenty years and has never spoken to him once in all that time? Is that your knowledge of Christ? If so, it is no knowledge at all. 'I have heard of him by the hearing of the ear,' describes all the acquaintance which a great many of my friends have with him. Oh! my brother! the very fact that he has been so long with you is the reason why you know so little about him. People that live close to something, which men come from the ends of the earth to see, have often never seen it. A man may have lived all his life within sound of Niagara, and perhaps never have gone to look at the rush of the waters. Is that what you do with Jesus Christ? Are you so accustomed to hear about him that you do not know him? Have you so long heard of him that you never come to see him? 'Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me?'" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

III. CHRIST PROMISES HIS DISCIPLES INCREASED POWER IN SERVICE AND PRAYER, verses 12-15. Turning to all the disciples, Jesus solemnly said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me shall do the works that I do and even greater works, because I go to my Father." They were to receive power after the Holy Spirit came upon them; and then they would do greater works than Christ did. The power of Christ did not leave the world at his death, but continued in greater measure through the disciples in virtue of their faith in him.

"Peter at Pentecost saw a greater work done in the instantaneous conversion of three thousand people than Jesus ever saw. The end of the life of Jesus found him with eleven men who imperfectly believed on him, one traitor, a group of loving women, a half-converted Nicodemus and a sympathetic Joseph of Arimathea. Pentecost was a greater miracle than Christ witnessed, and on that day his promise was fulfilled" (Dr. W. J. Dawson).

"The contrast is not so much between Jesus and his disciples as between Jesus here on earth, Jesus in humiliation, and Jesus in heaven with the Father, Jesus in exaltation, since the greater works of his disciples depend on his going to the Father" (George Reith).

"Jacob knew that Joseph was alive and that his sons had opened communication with him, because of the wagons that he sent; and we may know that Jesus lives beyond the mist of time, and that our faith has genuinely connected us with him, because we feel the pulse of his glorious nature within our own. And when this is so, we cannot but work out what he is working within" (Dr. B. F. Meyer).

Possibly Jesus knew that the thought of the greater works they were to do filled the hearts of the disciples with dread of their responsibility, and therefore he immediately reassured them with the promise of help: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." To ask in Christ's name is to use his name as a plea, to ask that the request be granted because of his merits rather than our own, and we can rightly claim this privilege only when our requests are in harmony with the spirit and interests of Christ. And there is another limitation added, "that the Father may be glorified in the Son." The object of their endowment with spiritual power is to serve God, not themselves.

"Be sure that it is impossible to seek the glory of God consistently with selfish aims. It is equally certain that none of us can pray for the glory of God unless we are living for it" (Dr. B. F. Meyer).

"If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." Power in work and prayer was a wonderful promise, but it could be fulfilled only for those who proved their love by hearty obedience.

"Love as a sentimental expression is delightful, but when love goes to work, it is divine. Christ has confidence in your affection when he sees it in action" (Dr. Griffin W. Bull).

IV. THE PROMISE OF THE COMFORTER, verses 16, 17. Christ will not leave them desolate, to help them he will send them another Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who will be with them for-ever. "Truth is the sphere or element in which he works, and truth is the effect he produces on the mind of the receiver" (George Reith). The Spirit would be peculiarly their own, for the worldly who have no sympathy with the Unseen, cannot receive him, since they cannot apprehend him. "Ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you." "There is a climax

in the thought; the Spirit is to be found where the people of God are—nay, he is inhabiting each of them" (George Reith).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. On what night was the Lord's Supper instituted? What did Jesus say in regard to the traitor, and where did Judas go? What had Jesus told his disciples before this in regard to his approaching death?

The Prophecy of Peter's Denial. Lovingly Jesus talked with his disciples after they had partaken of the Last Supper. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you; whither I go, ye cannot come." "Why not?" questioned Peter, and then with his usual assurance he added, "I will lay down my life for thee." "Wilt thou lay down thy life for me?" questioned Jesus. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice." So much was yet to happen that night, and so swiftly did one event follow upon another, that when his faithfulness was put to the test Peter had already forgotten his Lord's astounding prophecy.

The Last Discourse, Chapters 14, 15 and 16 of John's Gospel. Jesus and his eleven disciples were probably still in the Upper Room on that last Thursday evening of his life, when he spoke to them these wonderfully beautiful and comforting farewell words. They were the dying legacy of One who knew that in a few short hours he would breathe out his life in the awful agony and bitter humiliation of the cross. His thoughts were fixed not upon himself, but in profound pity and love upon his faithful followers as he endeavored to strengthen them to bear the trial that awaited them.

The substance of these chapters is, in brief, that though he is going away yet union with him is still possible, and though unseen he will be with them in living power.

The Divine Nature of Christ. As to the Person of our Lord, the record of no miracle could bear such testimony to his deity as the words which are recorded in this fourteenth chapter of John. Jesus claims to be one with God, to be worthy of trust as God, to be the sole Revealer of God, to be an abiding, personal Presence, inseparable from the divine Spirit of God. These claims are part of the very fabric of the narrative, but are incidental to its immediate aim, which is to record the words of comfort which Jesus addressed to his disciples.—Dr. Charles R. Erdman, in The Gospel of John.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Two, at least, of the men who had companied with Jesus for a long time were troubled with doubts. What Jesus said about his going away, about the mansions in his Father's house, and about their knowing the way thither, filled them with perplexity. He had endeavored to prepare them for this parting, had plainly told them that he was to lay down his life for the sins of the world, and that he should rise again, but they had not grasped his meaning. At Cæsarea Philippi they had declared their Master to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God; but their faith was ofttimes beclouded. Yet Jesus was not indignant at their slowness of understanding and their lack of faith. And he did not try to convince them by arguments. He patiently bade them continue in loving obedience to his words, and told them that the Holy Spirit would teach the truth to all who would receive him.

Some of you have pupils who are troubled by doubts. Arguments may not help them, but the method of the Master will.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
SOURCES OF THE CHRISTIAN'S COMFORT

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with the Text Explained.

Where I am, there Ye May Be also. On one of his many trips across the Atlantic, Dr G. Campbell Morgan and a friend had watched a glorious sunset together in silence, and then the friend said: "What a blessed thing it is that before we go hence God will enlarge our capacity! If there is anything much more beautiful in Heaven than that, I do not think I could bear it. How beautiful God must be when he paints a picture like that just to gladden us, and presently he will blot it out as though it didn't matter."

In those words is there not a hint of why we are told so little about Heaven? Our capacity must first be enlarged before we can appreciate it. The few words which Jesus spoke about our future home, far short as they fall of what we naturally long to know, are yet full of comforting assurance. Heaven is where God and Christ are. There are abiding places there for all who know the way through Christ.

Doubting Thomas Thorwaldsen

Christ has gone to prepare a place for us. This is the purpose of his atoning death: Hebrews 6.20. Do you recall Professor Drummond's illustration here? In a lonely valley in Switzerland a small band of patriots once marched against an invading force of ten times their strength. They found themselves one day at the head of a narrow pass, confronted by a solid wall of spears. They made assault after assault, but that bristling line remained unbroken. Time after time they were driven back decimated with hopeless slaughter. The forlorn hope rallied for the last time. As they charged, their leader suddenly advanced before them with outstretched arms, and every spear for three or four yards of the line was buried in his body. He fell dead. But he prepared a place for his followers. Through the open breach, over his dead body, they rushed to victory and won the freedom of their country. So the Lord Jesus went before his people, the Captain of our salvation, sheathing the weapons of death and judgment in himself and preparing a place for us with his dead body. Well for us is it, not only that he went away, but that he went by way of the cross.

In a recent sermon Dr. W. J. Dawson gave a beautiful thought in regard to Christ's words about the heavenly home. "It is not a many-mansioned city that man desires—it is a home. It is the vagueness and vastness of eternity that appalls man. It is the homeless immensity of the universe that dulls his spirit. It is the thought of going out into the vague unknown, the empty unpopulated fields of air, that makes death terrible. 'Let not your heart be troubled because of that,' says Jesus—'In that many-mansioned universe there is a room prepared for your home-coming. I myself will prepare it, as human hands gather flowers and light the lamp and kindle the fire when the son or brother comes home from hard travel and long war. Behold, I will meet you there, that where I am ye may be also.'"

The Implications of "If it Were not so I Would have Told you." Are there any words of Jesus more comforting and beautiful than these, which seem to assure us that the universal longings of the human heart in regard to the life to come are permitted because they are to be realized—that there will be the recognition of friends, the continuance of fellowships formed here, and special opportunities for service?

The belief in immortality is as extended as the world and as old as the centuries. Cato the Younger said:

> "It must be so. Plato thou reasonest well:
> Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
> This longing after immortality?
> Or whence this secret dread and inward horror
> Of falling into nought?
> 'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us
> And intimates eternity to man!"

If it were not so, Christ would have told us. "Every other being in creation finds somewhere an environment adapted to its needs. Desire in nature is the forerunner and prophecy of satisfaction. Each migratory instinct needs a climate to match it

at last. So even our sense of limitation and insufficiency is a promise of some better thing. Our shame and horror of evil are a promise that we were created for purity. Our hunger and thirst after righteousness are a promise of robes to be one day washed white. Why is man's heart fashioned so that he knows himself to be a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth, encamped here but not domesticated, like autumn swallows when they take wing for summer beyond the sea? Things like these must needs carry with them a great and precious promise. In our Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, he would have told us."

Help from Philip's Experience. God had been manifesting his tenderest and most characteristic attributes by the beauty of the Master's life, but Philip had failed to discern them; till now the Master bids him go back over the photographs of those years, as fixed in his memory, to see in a thousand tiny illustrations how truly the Father dwelt in him, and lived through his every word and work. He failed to know the Father, because he failed to know Christ; and he failed in this because he knew Christ only after the flesh. He was so familiar with him as his Friend, his love was so natural, tender, and human, he had become so clearly identified with all his daily existence, that they did not recognize the fire that shone behind the porcelain, the Deity that tabernacled beneath the frail curtains.

Often those who dwell amid the loveliest or grandest scenery miss the beauty which is unveiled to strangers from a distance. Certain lives have to be withdrawn from us before we understand how fair they were, and how much to us. And Jesus had to leave his disciples before they could properly appreciate him. The Holy Spirit must needs take of the things of Christ, and reveal them, before they could realize their true significance, symmetry, and beauty.

Let us get help from this. Many complain that they know Christ, pray to Christ, are conscious of Christ, but that the Father is far away and impalpable. They are therefore straining after some new vision or experience of God, and undervaluing the religious life to which they have already attained. It is a profound mistake. To have Jesus is to have God, to know Jesus is to know God; to pray to Jesus is to pray to God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh.—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

Christ Shows Us the Father. Many years ago a shy college student looked up with reverence to a certain inspiring teacher. He felt that he knew this distinguished teacher through his lectures, and through the chance exchanges of a recitation; but he had never ventured to call upon him; he had never talked with him in a personal and intimate way. It had never really occurred to him that he could do so; for the great teacher was occupied with his reading, his teaching, and his writing—and probably he did not know one of his pupils from another.

So the months passed till one day a friend of both told the young man that he had been speaking of him to the learned teacher incidentally, and suddenly the master had exclaimed, "I love that young fellow!" It was to the younger man a revelation: he knew that he was known and separated from the mass of pupils who through the years had been going in and out of a certain lecture room. He ventured, even yet somewhat timidly, to go to see the teacher in his study; and out of it sprang a friendship which can never end—a friendship which might not have been if the friend whom both had in common had not spoken his word of incidental testimony.

The mission of Jesus Christ is similar: he makes known to men how much God cares. And God is waiting even as that master of youth for the approach of those whom he loves. And when we know that he cares for us one by one, when we recover from our amazement that it can be so, when through Christ we are convinced beyond all peradventure, then we dare to pray as we never prayed before. We no longer approach him in a formal utterance only; but we talk with him, as a man speaks with his friend, and we are conscious of a new and wonderful experience—we enter by a glad surprise into his intimacy, "through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Dr. Charles Lewis Slattery, in Why Men Pray.

For Discussion. 1. Doubting Thomas. It is better to be a Thomas who gives voice to his doubt that he may receive instruction, than to be a doubter who keeps silent.

2. The lesson in the reticence of Jesus. Many a teacher has failed of his task because he has tried to impart too much, and has not been able to say to his pupil, "I have many things to teach, but ye cannot bear them now." Many a religious movement has failed because it demanded certainty about uncertain things, and left no room for reticence, reserve, or growth. Many a friendship is too insatiable in expression, forgetting that absolute sympathy need not be fortified by many words.

It is the same with Christian discipleship. "One step enough for me," says the loyal disciple.—Dr. F. G. Peabody.

3. Is prayer answered? The promise in verse 13 is limited by the phrase "in my name," which implies that the prayer must be offered in faith and must be in accordance with the will of God.

Questions to Think About. 1. What does it mean to "glorify the Father"? 2. What are the privileges of union with Christ? 3. What are the results of union with Christ? 4. Can one be "in Christ" and remain fruitless? 5. What is the lesson common to the parables of the Ten Virgins, the Talents, and the Last Judgment? 6. What is the test of discipleship?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
HOW JESUS COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES

Beginning the Lesson. A physician in an English town was once called to the door of a Gipsy cart. He gave one look at the little patient there and exclaimed, "Smallpox! Get out of town at once." It was the family of the noted evangelist who is known as "Gipsy Smith." They drove beyond the town limits and encamped. The father cared for the child, and the mother cooked for them. Another child was taken with the dread disease, and then the mother. From the first there was no hope for the mother. Realizing this, the father who once in prison had heard a sermon, and had then learned there is a God, asked her if she knew about him. "Yes," she said, "but there is no mercy for me." In utter despair the man bowed his head, and then heard his wife sing happily:

"I have a Father in the promised land
My Father calls me, I must go
To meet him in the promised land."

"Where did you learn that?" he exclaimed. "When a child," she answered. "Once my father's tent was pitched on Sunday where the village children passed it on their way to Sunday-school. I followed them, and heard this song, but I had forgotten it till now." In her great need the song came back to her, and the thought that it was her Father she was going to meet brought her peace and comfort. She was no longer afraid to die.

Jesus, realizing that his Father was calling him and he must go to meet him, spent the last hours that he had with his disciples the night before his death in speaking words of comfort and encouragement, and in telling them that in his Father's house above there was room for them, too.

Christ's Message of Cheer. A little girl was making her first trip across the Continent. At first she kept looking ahead with much apprehension at the great gorges, but after the train had crossed bridge after bridge she settled back contentedly in her seat, whispering to her mother as she did so, "Mother, some one has put bridges for us all the way."

This was the message of cheer which Jesus had for his followers the last night that he spent with them. He himself was going before them and would prepare the way for them. Who will repeat his words—the first three verses of our lesson?

There is a hymn we sometimes sing. I am sure you know the words written by Phœbe Cary:

One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er—
I am nearer home today
Than I ever have been before:
Nearer my Father's house
Where the many mansions be;
Nearer the great white throne,
Nearer the crystal sea.

We shall think of our future home as a happy place if we always think of it as the place our Savior has prepared for us, the place to which he has gone on ahead to await the coming of all who love him.

What did Jesus say his followers would do if they loved him?

Jesus is the Way. In the north of Scotland, at Inverness, there is a stone in which there is a footprint, a step made by a naked foot. Long, long ago some

man was walking and set his foot down here, when the stone wasn't a stone as yet, was still loose sand wet by the tides of some forgotten sea. I wonder what kind of man he was. We don't know. He just left this one footprint and passed on.

It seems the stone was not always in Inverness, but once lay out on a hillside; and always when a chief of a certain clan died the new, young chief put his foot into the footprint in the stone, and swore to be true to the clan; that he, too, like those who had gone before him, would live for the clan, work for the clan, die for the clan.

And here are the footprints that Jesus Christ has left. It is not enough to look at him and say how splendid and brave and kind he was. We must make up our minds to be so, too, to follow in his steps. Won't you put your foot into the print upon the stone, Christ's print, and swear that you, too, will think of others, work for others, live for others, and for Jesus Christ and God, will follow in Christ's steps?—Condensed from the Expository Times.

If we Know Jesus we Know God. Robert Williams, a Nez Perees Indian preacher, after holding up Jesus as a tender, loving Guide to his followers, said, "And you need not be afraid of the Father. He is *koup-kim-e-ki*—Just on the other side of Jesus." I think that this Indian preacher must have had in mind certain words in our lesson which Jesus spoke to his disciples: What were they?

If you think of God as just on the other side of Jesus, as just like Jesus, you will love him even as you love Jesus his Son. A small boy and his grown-up brother stood looking at the portrait of their father whom the younger son could not remember. "Tell me what my father was like," the boy said. "He was a good, kind, able, just man," the other answered, but that did not satisfy the lad. "Tell me," he eagerly cried, "was he anything like you?" Then solemnly the other replied, "Those who knew us both tell me that I am my father's living image." The little fellow walked away with his heart all aglow, saying to himself: "I know what kind of man my father was; he was just like my brother." And so we know the kind of Father God is, for he is just like Jesus Christ.

Jesus's Words about Answered Prayer. Jesus said that if we asked anything *in his Name,* it would be given us. You are often inclined to ask for just what you happen to want at the time, but you do not know whether it is really good or not. A little girl I knew was once heard saying, as she sat on the stairs looking out at the rain, "Oh, Father in Heaven, do make it a fine day!" Well, it did not become a fine day, and I suppose if God had made the weather change just to please her for a little while, it would have done more harm somewhere else. Besides, it was much better for her to learn to be happy whatever the weather was than to be pleased by something outside herself for a short time.

When we learn to know what Jesus wants, we know that we are really asking for something good. To ask in his Name means that. When an ambassador goes to another country he does a lot of speaking, but what he says is not what he thinks but what his country has to say to the other country. It is a splendid thing to pray in the Name of Jesus, because it sifts out all the silly and the selfish things that we might ask of God. What we have to do is to learn to ask him for the really best things, because he is waiting to give them to us; the great difficulty is that we do not want them until we have learned to pray truly in Jesus's Name, or for his sake. It may seem hard at first that you do not get just what you want, but as you learn to pray the other way you will find that it would have been harder still if you had the things you asked for in your own name only. Jesus wants you yourself to want the things that are the best of all.—Will Reason, in What Jesus Said.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. I wonder many times that ever a child of God should have a sad heart, considering what God is preparing for him.—Rutherford.

Thou who art Light, shine on each soul!
Thou who art Truth, each mind control!
Open our eyes and let us see
The path which leads to heaven and thee.—John Hay.

Questions to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does it mean to "abide in Christ"? 2. What is meant in the Golden Text by "beareth much fruit"? 3. Why do gardeners prune grape vines? What does verse 2 mean? 4. What fruit does Christ expect from Intermediates and Seniors?

LESSON V—FEBRUARY 1

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

GOLDEN TEXT: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit. John 15.5

LESSON John 15.1-27 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 119.9-16

REFERENCE MATERIAL John 15.16; Galatians 5.16-25

JOHN 15.1 I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and *so* shall ye be my disciples. 9 Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. CHRIST THE TRUE VINE, verse 1. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." This metaphor may have been suggested by the fruit of the vine which had just been used and consecrated at the Last Supper, by the many vines on the hillside, or by the odor of branches which the vine-dressers burned at that season of the year. Yet it was a well-known metaphor: Jeremiah speaks of the Jews being a noble vine that had turned into degenerate branches, Jer. 2.21. The Expositor's Greek Testament recalls the fact that on the Maccabean coinage Israel was represented by a vine, and adds: "It was the present situation which here suggested the figure. As Jesus rose to depart the disciples crowded round him with anxiety on every face. Their helplessness and trouble appealed to him, and he encouraged them by reminding them that, although left to do his work in the world, they would still be united to him as truly as the branches to the vine. He and his together are the true Vine of God. His Father is the Vine-dresser: what was now happening was the Father's doing, and, therefore, tended to the well-being and fruitfulness of the vine."

II. THE PRUNING OF THE BRANCHES, verses 2, 3. "Ye are the branches (verse 5): every branch in me that beareth not fruit, the Husbandman taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth (pruneth) that it may bear more fruit." Both figures here refer to the process of pruning, which may be seen every year in the vineyards. Useless branches are cut off, and from the fruit-bearing branches the superfluous leaves are removed that no sap may be wasted.

The Christian can always become more Christ-like: it is not enough for him to be good, he must strive to become the best that it is possible for him to be.

And then Jesus gave his disciples the comforting assurance that already they were clean—ready to bear fruit—because of the whole revelation (words) they had heard from him. "God, by his providences, does discipline Christians. However, the instrument here suggested by which this pruning is accomplished is not divine Providence but the teachings and manifested will of Christ. The disciples, who had received the word, were cleansed, in principle and potentially; but in experience every follower of Christ must apply to his own life this pruning-knife, if fruit is to be produced in character and service" (Dr. Charles R. Erdman).

"People talk as if the blessed Master only got fruit out of us with a prunin' knife—always standin' over us, an' a-cuttin' here an' a-loppin' there. Why, bless his name, sunshine and showers, and the gentle south-winds have a deal more to do with a bunch of grapes than prunin' knives have. The dear Lord a-standin' over us with all his kindness and care—why, he is trainin' the branches, an' his watchin' over us, an' his gentleness and lovin' care has a great deal more to do with the fruit than the knife has" (Mark Guy Pearse).

"It becomes an increasingly solemn conviction to me that God is using every usable man he can get his divine hand upon, and that to the uttermost. I believe that in the divine economy there is no room for waste; and I believe that if God is not using your life, it is because you are not usable" (Dr. J. Stuart Holden). "Let us not think it strange if we find it necessary to go often, hour by hour, day after day, to the cleansing place of the heart. Is not this place prayer? And is not the Word of God there, too? For Christ said, 'Now ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you'" (John Timothy Stone).

III. CONDITIONS OF FRUITFULNESS, verses 4, 5. "Abide in me, and I in you." To "abide" occurs some sixteen times in John's Gospel. True followers of Christ must be one with Christ.

"We are not to be as vagrants who sleep upon a new doorstep every night, and who only occasionally return to our old resting-place. We are not even to be visitors of the Lord, turning aside now and again for a brief sojourn, and then away into forgetfulness again. 'She had the Lord on her visiting list!' No, not that! We are to settle down with the Lord, to rest in him, to abide in him, to make him our eternal dwelling-place. We are to be at home in the Lord" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

"In and through you I will live henceforth," is Jesus's promise. "For those who are so immersed in daily business as to be unable for long together to keep their minds fixed on Christ, we say that their abiding in him does not depend on their perpetual realization and consciousness of his presence, but on the faith that they have done and said nothing inconsistent with the holy bond of fellowship. You are in a lift until you step out of it, though you may not be thinking of the lift. You keep on a road until you take a turning right or left, although, engrossed in converse with your friend, you do not think of the road. You are in Christ amid the pressure of daily care, and the haste of business, as long as your face is toward the Lord, your attitude that of humble submission, and your conscience void of offense" (Dr. B. F. Meyer).

"I am the vine,"—I am the source of your life—"ye are the branches." This figure corresponds to that of the body and its members: Mt. 26.26; Rom. 12.5; 1 Cor. 10.17. Note that Jesus does not say he is the vine-stock, the main stem of the vine, but that he is the vine, the whole plant—root, stem, branches, leaves, fruit. The disciples are the branches, they are a part of the vine: thus by this figure Jesus wonderfully expresses the mysterious oneness, the vital relationship, between himself and his followers.

"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit."

"Nowhere does the Lord contemplate a little fruit. A berry here and there! A thin branch of sour, unripened grapes! Yet it is too true that many believers yield no more than this" (Dr. B. F. Meyer).

"You can no more produce a virtue without the vine than can a barbed wire fence grow luscious grapes. All the vigor, endurance, luxuriance, graces, goodness that we possess have come to us because the life of Christ has been flowing through his followers" (Griffin W. Bull). "Apart from me ye can do nothing."

"What can a branch be apart from the vine? It may retain a certain, momentary greenness, but death is advancing apace. And there are multitudes of professing Christians who are like detached branches; their spiritual life is ebbing away" (Jowett).

IV. THE FATE OF THE FRUITLESS, verse 6. One who abides not in Christ is cast forth as a useless branch, and in the vineyards such cast-off branches are gathered and burned. "The thought is not to be so pressed as to raise the question of the loss of souls who are once united with Christ. We are concerned here with service rather than salvation. The words, however, are not without serious implications as to the absolute necessity of a real and continuous union with Christ" (Dr. C. R. Erdman).

A naturalist tells us of a peculiar process by which willows and poplar trees cast off unhealthy branches. Close to the trunk there grows a special kind of cell formation which slowly encircles the limb, shutting off nutrition until the limb dies and the wind hurls it down. It is the lack of soul nourishment which brings about the downfall of men.

V. THE BLESSINGS OF FRUITAGE, verses 7-11. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you"—this is the condition: "ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "To cherish all they had learned of him would enable them

to abide in him; and while pondering upon his word, it would be to them as if they were holding true communion with himself and he were actually abiding within them, for his word is spirit and life" (George Reith). Prayer will be granted which is in harmony with God's will, and those who are abiding in Christ, who are one with Christ, in whom Christ's words abide and are obeyed, can ask for nothing that must be refused. "Life, fruitfulness, and success in prayer all depend upon our relationship to Christ. If we abide in him we shall not wither nor die; we shall bear fruit, and we shall be able to pray. The consciousness of abiding is less important than the evidences of it" (Dr. Robert E. Speer).

"God leaves unanswered among earnest prayers only those which his own character and plans make it impossible for him to answer. And can he in whom this word of Christ abides—'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness'—go on clamoring with miserable mercenary prayers for houses and lands, for food and drink, as if they were the first things to seek?" (Phillips Brooks).

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." To "glorify God" means to recognize and acknowledge his true character. The Father is the Husbandman: much fruit testifies to his skill and care. "And so shall ye be my disciples."

"A Christian never 'is' but always 'is becoming' a Christian. And it is by his fruitfulness that he indicates his claim to the name" (Westcott).

"Abide in my love: even as the Father hath loved me, I have loved you." And then Jesus reminded them that it was only through obedience to his commandments that they could do so, and further encouraged them in obedience by adding that he had remained in his Father's love by keeping his Father's commandments.

"When the physician says, 'Stay out of doors; live in the sunshine,' we know what he means. We have not to make the beautiful outdoor world and create the sunshine, we have only to step out into them; they are already here with their beauty and warmth, and we have only to let them do their life-giving work. But when the Great Physician bids us live in his love, we some way feel that the love is some flame that we are to kindle in our own hearts and keep burning, and we are filled with anxious watchfulness. It is his love—the great, warming, comforting sunlight—in which we are to live without doubt or fear. It is not of our making, it is beyond our measuring or quenching. It is here now, flooding the world around us, and we have only to open our hearts and lives to its joy instead of turning our steps into the shadows" (Dr. J. R. Miller).

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." It was Christ's joy that they were to possess, and Christ found his joy in fellowship with the Father and in his Father's will.

"The reason for Christ's joyfulness corresponds to a universal law that the happiest people on earth are those who are doing most for others" (Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick). **"There is no mystery about happiness whatever. Put in the right ingredients, and it must come out. He that abideth in him will bring forth much fruit; bringing forth much fruit, is happiness"** (Henry Drummond).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In our last lesson what did Jesus call himself? What did he mean by these metaphors? In that lesson what did he say about prayer?

The Purpose of the Allegory of the Vine and the Branches. During the first part of Jesus's last discourse, the disciples, as we saw in our lesson last week, interrupted him with questions and objections. "Lord," said Thomas, "we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?" "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no one cometh unto the Father but by me," was Jesus's answer. Then Philip made his request, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us"; and when Jesus had answered this demand, Judas (not Iscariot) said, "Lord what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" The disciples were mystified by Jesus's words and as they realized that they could not understand him they were awed into silence at last, not daring, as Mark tells us, to ask him any further question. Then it was that Jesus gave them his beau-

tiful allegory of the vine and the branches, to reveal to them the mystery of the vital, everlasting union between himself and them, the necessity of their continuing united with him in a spiritual sense in order to bring forth much fruit in his service.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Judas had left the circle. The dastardly deed which Jesus well knew would follow, did not obscure for the Master the faithfulness of the remaining eleven. One was treacherous, but eleven were true. Jesus called them his friends, and they deserved this tribute.

You may have one or two difficult pupils. Is there danger lest they dim for you the loyalty of the others? Do you allow your mind to be so engrossed with the troublesome ones that you fail to give the loyal ones their due?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
UNION WITH CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with The Text Explained.

What Abiding in Christ Means. We should all understand what was meant if it were said of a young and dutiful child that he abode or lived in his parent. The child's earliest years are so completely hidden behind the parent's life that you do not look upon him altogether as a separate individuality, but rather as almost a part of the same organism, one expression of the parent's nature; so that, just as the arm, the tongue, the eye, are several media for the expression of the parent's will, in the same way, though in a higher degree, the child is another limb of the parental life and utterance of the parental nature. The law owns this, and reaches the child only through the parent. We all expect children's opinions on matters of religion, of politics, of taste, to be echoes of their parents. The father acts and thinks for the child. The child acts and thinks in the father. Thus, until the time when the gradual departure takes place, the child's home is not merely in his father's house, but in his father's character—he abides in him.

Or take another case: the army and the common soldier "abide in" the general. The army does what its general does. As an army, it has no thought or action out of him. It moves when he moves, stops moving when he stops moving. We say the general has gone here and there, and we mean the army has gone. It lays aside all faculty of decision, or rather contributes it all to him, and he with the combined responsibility of the great multitude upon him goes his way, carrying their life in his. There is perhaps the most complete and absolute identification of two lives which it is possible to conceive of.

Now, we can get probably a better idea from these examples than we could from any careful definitions of what it is for a human soul to "abide in Christ." The child abides in the father; the soldier abides in the general. For the soul to abide in Christ, then, is for it to be to him what the child is to the father, what the soldier is to his captain. It is for it to give up its will to his as completely as the surrenders of will are made in the family and in the army. Nay, the "giving up of will" does not entirely express it, because that implies something like reluctance and resistance. But the child has no will except the father's; and the soldier's will is so entirely at one with his captain's upon the great general purpose of the war, which is victory, that he rejoices to accept the captain's will in all details and make it his own. Christ is at once our Father and our Captain. Perfect affection and perfect loyalty combine to shape our attitude towards him, and the result of the two is that complete identification of our life with his life by which we "abide in him."—Phillips Brooks, in The Battle of Life.

The Result of Union with Christ is Fruitage. Jesus expects an impulse to arise from within and set the whole life in motion, just as the sap forces the leaf and fruit forth into the world. He expects your connection with him to tell its story in terms of life. He expects his heart blood to go pulsing through you and make you act as the promptings of his heart caused him to act. A formal connection with a church without a vital connection with the Christ will bear no more fruit than a formal connection with the cement in the walls of the church. You may go through the spasmodic action of an occasional good thing and feel comfortable. Tying a bunch of grapes to a lamppost does not make a vineyard. Let Christ live in you and fruit must follow. Do not be a dead branch—be a blessing.—Dr. Griffin W. Bull, in Daily Reminders from John's Gospel.

Without Me ye Can Do Nothing. When the war first came, we heard men say, "Why did not Christianity prevent this war?" It never occurred to anyone to ask why science did not prevent the war. And I never heard anyone ask, "Why did not big business or the newspapers or the universities prevent the war?" It never seemed to occur to anyone that commerce or the press or education could avert such disaster. It was a mighty tribute which men paid to the strength of spiritual forces when they said, sometimes wistful and sometimes with a sneer, "Why did not Christianity prevent this war?"

Well, why didn't it? I have my own idea about that. I have the feeling that it was because we did not have enough of Christianity on hand in the summer of 1914, and what we had was not always of the right sort.—Dr. Charles R. Brown.

Some Analogies to This Appeal of Christ. The sun says to the little earth-planet, Abide in me. Resist the temptation to fly into space, remain in the solar sphere, and I will abide in the formation of thy rocks, the verdure of thy vegetation, and all living things, baptizing them in my fire.

Abide in me, says the ocean to the alcove, that shows symptoms of division from its waves. Keep thy channel unsilted and open, and I will pour my fullness up to thy farthest shore, twice in every twenty-four hours.

Abide in me: the vine says it to the branch, that it may impart supplies of life and fruit; the air says it to the lung, that it may minister ozone and oxygen to its cells; the magnet says it to the needle, that it may communicate its own specific quality, and fit it to guide across the ocean the mighty steamer, laden with freight of human life.

Abide in me: the artist says it to the novice; Edison would say it to some young Faraday; the preacher to the student. Any man who is eager to impart his ideas to coming time is glad when some young life, eager, quick to receive formative impressions, presents itself. Here, says he, is my opportunity of incarnating myself afresh, and still living, speaking, painting, when my life is done. "Stay with me, young soul, share my home, saturate yourself with my ideas and methods of expression, go to no other fields to glean, and I will give my best self in return."

In all these cases, it is always the stronger that pleads with the weaker to abide, promising the communication to fuller life. Each, in measure, says, in words of the glorious Christ, "I am stronger, wiser, fuller, better than you; all is mine that it may be yours, therefore, abide in me, and I will abide in you."—Dr. F. B. Meyer, in Love to the Uttermost.

"Abide in Me and I in You." The gospel of Christ is not a more searching code of commandments than that associated with Sinai. It does not aim merely to induce men to keep a better devised set of rules than were ever known before. It is a gospel rather than a code. It is not legal but evangelical.

"If ye abide in me and my words abide in you," as settled principles of action, as determining ideals, "ye shall ask . . . and it shall be done." When you abide in him the upthrust of your life in request and the outreach of it in service will accomplish your desire. You will move forth with the strength of ten because your heart is pure and your aspiration true through that sense of union with him. A single grain of dust at the point of contact will turn back a current of electricity and leave the room dark or withhold power from the motor. A single grain of conscious, wilful, deliberate evil at the point of contact between the soul of man and the Spirit of the Eternal will defeat the beneficence of the Master. Abide in him! Keep the way open, the point of contact clear, the sense of union real, and your whole moral effort will be made effective.

This word "abide" may seem to indicate a passive, quiescent attitude. But the kingdom of God is "a going concern." It is not static—it is dynamic. The man who walks with God must keep moving. His inner life must advance, keeping step with the divine purpose for him. It is a living, moving, accomplishing Christ with whom we have to do. He will go on without you. If you would abide, you must act.—Dr. Charles R. Brown, in The Congregationalist.

For Discussion. The problem of prayer. Can the conclusion of verse seven be divorced from the premise?

Questions For Pupils to Think About. 1. What do we know about Christ's habit of prayer? 2. In the Lord's Prayer, what is it that Christ would have his disciples desire for themselves? 3. In this Intercessory Prayer what does he desire for them? 4. How did he glorify the Father? 5. What does he mean by his words of verse 3? 6. What was the work which God had given him to do? 7. How do you explain the limitation in verse 9?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
FRUIT-BEARING LIVES

Beginning the Lesson. The culture of the vine has always been one of the leading industries of the Holy Land. Vineyards abound today on the hillsides, often where it is so rocky that one wonders how the roots ever found sufficient soil to grow, but they sink themselves very deep till they reach the moisture that drips over the surface of the mountain rock. The hillside is terraced, the retaining walls being built up of rough stones, and each terrace being only one to five yards in width. The vines are planted about twelve feet apart to allow the branches to spread, and are cut back and not allowed to bear fruit for three years. The spreading branches are sometimes allowed to hang over the walls, but more often are raised from the ground by props. In large vineyards there is a wine-press and a booth for the watchman, whose gun and club drive off thieves and wild beasts.

Pruning the Vine Eugène Burnand

On the last night that he spent with his disciples, Jesus spoke of himself as the true Vine. What did he mean? (Continue with The Text Explained.)

What Does it Mean to "Abide in Christ"? See the words of Phillips Brooks, preceding Topic.

By Their Fruits ye Shall Know Them. The pear trees in a certain garden and orchard were trying to settle which of them was the finest tree, but they could not manage it for want of a common criterion. The fact is, every tree who entered into the dispute thought that he was the finest.

But all the trees hushed their voices, for the gardener was coming round and telling a visitor about the various trees. He passed by the great big tree, saying, "Oh, that is left standing because it is hardly worth while to plant a good tree so near to the high road. Its fruit is small and poor."

Of the tree which was so proud of its regular shape the gardener said, "Yes; a nice-looking tree, but a shy bearer. I mean to have a more trustworthy tree in its place this autumn." "What is *this* tree?" the visitor asked, pointing to the one at which the others had laughed. The gardener answered, "It is the white beam tree—*Pyrus Aria*. How it came here I don't know, but master keeps it because it bears an abundance of berries of which the birds are uncommonly fond."

Then the two men looked at the pear on the quince stock. "Grows very fast," said the gardener, "but doesn't fruit well at all. It is too sappy and bush-growing."

"What have you been doing here?" inquired the visitor, standing before the tree which had spoken last in the dispute. "That tree has been doing badly of late," answered the gardener. "Nearly all its fruit has been cracked and worthless, so I have been trying what a little fresh soil, with iron in it, will do. If that does not improve things we must cut it down. But here is the gem of our collection," said the gardener, pointing out a tree which was not remarkable for great size or for beauty of shape. "This is a fine old tree with three grafts, and we get jargonelles early in the season, later the St. Michael, and last the Winter Nelis—all good and all abundant."

When the gardener was gone the trees rustled softly, "Is fruit everything then? Are we to be judged by that alone?" And some of the trees were thoughtful and troubled for a long time.

That is the rule, the "common criterion," for human beings, too. It is foolish to rate ourselves by our looks or our learning, our birth or our position, our money or our accomplishments. What the great Gardener looks for is fruit—that is, service to others, something produced that is of use and help to our fellows.—John A. Hamilton, in A Mountain Path.

The Secret of Bearing Good Fruit. An English writer tells us that a vine at Hampton Court for many years disappointed the gardener's expectations. It was a healthy vine, but it produced very few grapes. Then came a year when it was heavily laden with great, luscious clusters. In order to understand the mystery, the gardener laid bare its roots, and followed them along till he found that they had at last gone through the banks into the Thames, whence they were drawing up all the moisture needed.

Much Fruit

From that vine let us learn the secret of a fruit-bearing Christian. He finds the way to the Source of strength, the Inspiration of daily conduct, for it is only through vital union with Christ that he bears much fruit. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches"; a branch severed from the vine yields no fruit. Just as the branch of the grape vine must grow out of the stalk in order to bear grapes, so you and I must keep close to Christ in order to live the fruitful life which he expects from his followers.

Abide in me. Many a stately elm that seems full of vigorous life, for all its spreading boughs and clouds of dancing leaves is hollow at the heart, and when the storms come goes down with a crash and men wonder as they look at the scene, how such a mere shell of life with a core of corruption could stand so long. It rotted within and fell at last because its roots did not go deep down to the rich soil where they would have found nourishment, but ran along near the surface among gravel and stones. If we would stand firm, be sound within, and bring forth much fruit, we must strike our roots deep in him who is the Nourisher of all our being.—Dr. Alexander Maclaren, in The Secret of Power.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. There are some people who *visit* Christ: there are others who *abide in him*.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself to walk even as he walked.—John.

We abide in Christ when we do all things as unto him.—H. E. Luccock.

The pruning only shows that the Gardener cares.—F. W. Boreham.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Whom did Jesus teach the words of the Lord's Prayer? 2. What great things does he wish for them in this prayer of our lesson? 3. What does Paul say in 1 Tim. 2.1, 2 about prayer for others? 4. Do you pray for others?

CHRIST'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER

GOLDEN TEXT: Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are. John 17.11

LESSON John 17.1-26 DEVOTIONAL READING Ephesians 3.14-21

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 6.9-13

JOHN 17 These things spake Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee: 2 even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that to all whom thou hast given him, he should give eternal life. 3 And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, *even* Jesus Christ. 4 I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. 6 I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word. 7 Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee: 8 for the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received *them,* and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send me. 9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine: 10 and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them. 11 And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we *are.* 12 While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy made full in themselves.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR HIMSELF, verses 1-5. After his farewell discourse Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee." *To glorify* means to make intelligible, and Christ's words here mean, "Show now the character of thy Son, that he may show thy character." "By his request to be glorified, Jesus referred to his crucifixion, his triumph over the grave, his ascension, and supremely his outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Jesus desired to be made known in his true character, as the divine Son of God, as the Messiah, as the Savior of the world" (Dr. C. R. Erdman). This is indicated in the next words of his prayer, "Even as thou gavest him authority over all mankind ('flesh' is the Old Testament word for mankind as mortal), that to all whom thou hast given him, he should give eternal life."

And then Jesus defined life eternal as knowing God and himself, the Son of God. "No human presumption, since the beginning of the world to the present time, has ever dared to couple its name with the name of the eternal God as essential to eternal life, as Christ does here. Thee and me—what a wonderful assertion!" (Dr. Alexander McKenzie). *To know* here has no such impoverished content as we give to the word in common speech. Dr. J. H. Jowett has looked deep into its significance and writes:

"Our supposed knowledge of men has often no appreciable effect even in shaping our conduct, not to name the deeper result of determining our character. But here in our text, knowledge implies life: nay, it is life! 'This is life eternal, to know Jesus.' You cannot have one without the other. Here, at any rate, knowledge is inseparable from living. To know Jesus is to live Jesus. There can be no knowledge of Christ without obedience. If we are destitute of obedience, then that which we assume to be knowledge is no knowledge at all, and we must give it another name. Without love we cannot know Christ. What is love? Though we cannot define a sentiment, we can sometimes suggest it by its effects. Love is 'good-will toward men.' 'He that loveth not, knoweth not God.' Then good-will is essential to knowledge of God; without it knowledge can never be. To know Christ, I must obey, I must love. To know Christ I must will as Christ wills. To know Christ, I must love as Christ loves. And what is this but to say that to know Christ I must be like him! To know Christ is to have his will, and to have his love, and to have his life, and therefore to know him, just as he is, as our Kinsman, is life eternal."

The advance there may be in spiritual life and knowledge, an English preacher strikingly illustrated from the beetle crawling over the ruts in the road with its extreme limitations; the bird winging its way through the air, less handicapped than the beetle, but with obvious restrictions; the peasant who could think of the coming harvest and of his wife and children, yet living in a narrow sphere when compared with the more imaginative, highly sensitive life of the artist or thinker, the man to whom life reveals what is not as well as what is, who dreams dreams and sees visions.

"And the life that some men and women are living without touching hands with God," said the preacher in his application of the illustration, "is like the life of the beetle. The central fact to me is a relationship—touching hands with God. And we find the trysting-place in Jesus Christ."

"I have glorified thee on the earth," Jesus continued in his prayer, "have made thy mind luminous and intelligible to men, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do." God is glorified most by a life obedient to his will.

"There is a specifically appointed work for every individual. Let it be settled that it is for work that God has sent us into the world. Then let it be understood that, as truly as for our Lord, so for us there is some specific work to accomplish" (Charles Brown).

"When the great span across the East River was finished, the builder was brought down on his sick-bed to see the bridge—brought in a canal boat and anchored in front of the great span. There, lying on his pillows, with the drafts of the bridge on each side of him, he looked down at them, and then up at the span, and said, 'It is like the plan.' May you and I come to our dying hour and look up to God and say: 'My life is like the plan; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do'" (Arthur T. Pierson).

"And now, Father, Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." "Jesus Christ *had* glory when he came into this world—he brought it with him—his incarnation did not create it. He *added* to it when he moved amid the scenes of earth, and when he ascended by the way of sacrificial triumph he *took* glory with him into the other world.

"What do you understand by glory? Have you progressed beyond the period when glory means glitter, pomp, splendor, wealth, magnificence, and tinfoil? Or does character captivate you and righteousness hold your reverence? Are you overpowered by opulence and tongue-tied by tinsel? When you ask God to make you glorious do you mean for him to make you Christ-like, or conspicuous; to make you pure, or to make you popular and prosperous; to make you sinless, or to make you spectacular?" (Dr. G. W. Bull).

II. CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR HIS DISCIPLES, verses 6-19. Jesus prayed next for his immediate disciples, the eleven who had companied with him so long and faithfully. Note the words in which he describes them: "the men whom thou gavest me out of the world" ("thine they were," for before they knew me they were faithful to the light so far received from the Scriptures, "and thou gavest them to me"); "they have kept thy word"; "the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received them."

"God may bless what you say; he must bless what he says" (Francis Havergal).

"They believed that thou didst send me." Should not all this be true of Christ's followers everywhere?

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world." "Can a missionary be charged with neglecting a dark continent because he concentrates thought and care on a few elect spirits gathered around him? Election is not exclusive but inclusive. Its purpose is not primarily the salvation or delectation of the few; but their equipment to become the apostles to the many. And if Jesus thought, cared and prayed so much for those whom the Father had given him, his ulterior thought was that the world might believe that the Father had sent him, verse 21" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

"And all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them." "The statement does not refer to persons only but continues and amplifies the reason with which verse nine concludes: 'For they are thine, and all my things are thine.' There should be no full stop at the end of verse nine. The statement is made conversely in 'Thine are mine,' to insist on the perfect union

between the Father and the Son" (Dr. Plummer). "It would not be so much if he simply said: All that is mine is thine; for that every one can say; but this is much greater, that he inverts the relation and says, All that is thine is mine; this no creature can say in reference to God" (Luther).

During his earthly ministry Jesus has continually guarded and kept his disciples, "the son of perdition" being the only one who perished. There is a play upon words here in the Greek: *apoleto—apoleias,* None of them *perished,* but the Son of *perishing.* Now the time of his departure is at hand, and he commits them into the keeping of his Father.

"Happy are we if we can leave our unfinished task to be taken up by God. Happy are we if we can leave those for whom we have been so long praying in his hands. We can go home quietly then. By the way, are you beginning things you can ask God with good grace to finish?" (Dr. G. W. Bull).

"Keep them in thy name that they may be one, even as we are."

"The name, we know, signifies quite generally in Biblical writings the attitude, the function, or character. If the Christian church could but have kept with singleness of vision in the name of God, that is, in the knowledge of his character and work as the thing needful, its history would have been far other than one of so much discord; then we might have been one, even as God and Christ" (Dr. Henry T. Fowler).

III. JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL BELIEVERS, verses 20-26.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How has Christ taught the disciples the thought of oneness with him? What does it mean to glorify God?

The End of the Last Discourse. By his beautiful illustration of the vine and the branches (our lesson last week), Jesus taught his disciples their need of continuing in spiritual union with him, that through him they might receive strength and bear much fruit. "Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you," Jesus continued. He had chosen them to be his friends, he had made known to them his Father's words, that they might be fruitful in deeds.

Then Jesus warned the disciples that they were to suffer hatred and persecution, and told them they must remember that they were only sharing in his suffering because of their fellowship with him. The Jews had seen him and hated him, and in doing so they were seeing and hating the Father. When the Comforter, whom he would send, should come, he, the Son, would not be left without a witness, for the Holy Spirit and the disciples themselves would bear testimony to him.

Continuing his discourse, Jesus sought to prepare his disciples for the future with all its suffering, and to comfort them. He told them that they would be excommunicated and killed by those who so little knew the Father and the Son that they would think they were serving God in this way. He would gladly have remained silent about these things; and in the beginning, while he was with them, he had not made these things real to them, for then they leaned on him as do children on their parents, and could not rightly apprehend the coming trouble. Now, however, he is to leave them, and he warns them so that in the hour of their trial they may remember his prophecy and the knowledge may strengthen them in their loyalty to such an omniscient Lord.

Sorrow filled their hearts, and they were too saddened by the thought of separation from their Master, and depressed by the dark future disclosed to them, to ask him any question about his departure. Jesus remarked upon their silence, and added, that, strange as it might seem to them now, they should live to see that his going away was really a blessing, for in his stead he would send the Comforter. The withdrawal of the visible Christ, present among them, was necessary in order that his Spirit might dwell in them.

The Farewell Prayer. At the conclusion of his discourse Jesus offered the beautiful prayer which we study today. The singing of a hymn followed—probably the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm, one of the Psalms always sung at the Passover Feast (Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever). "Arise, let us go hence," was then Jesus's signal for departure to the Mount of Olives.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

What must it have meant to those sorrowing disciples to hear their Lord calmly committing them to the Father's care! How precious must every sentence of that prayer have been to them as in after years they recalled it! Do you believe in prayer? Do you believe in intercessory prayer? Do you pray for your pupils? Do you lead them to pray for others?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
CHRIST'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Beginning the Lesson. When John Knox, the famous Scotch reformer, was dying, his wife sat by his bedside and asked if she should read from the Word. "Yes," he replied, "where I first cast anchor." Thereupon she read from John the seventeenth chapter. As the dying man grew weaker and the power of speech failed him, another standing by called to him loudly as to one journeying afar. "John Knox, hast thou hope?" He slowly lifted his finger and pointed upward. That was all, and that was enough.

Others beside Knox have called for this chapter as the lights of life grew dim. It is said of Bossuet, the renowned French preacher, that by his request this chapter was read to him sixty times during his last illness. Profounder Scripture than this there is not to be found in all the Bible. It is the great High Priestly prayer of our Lord, and there is none like it. In the course of his last lecture, given shortly before his death, Melancthon said: "There is no voice which has ever been heard either in heaven or in earth, more exalted, more holy, more fruitful, more sublime, than this prayer offered up by the Son of God." Fitting, is it not, that at the close of his most remarkable discourse there should follow this most remarkable of his prayers.—Dr. Edgar Dewitt Jones.

An Accomplished Work. The best of men must admit they have failed to realize their ideal—they have to confess that they have come short of their own plans and expectations. Frankly, we have been a disappointment to ourselves. Yet Christ, looking back upon the most colossal undertaking that ever originated in the mind of God, could not find anything he had left undone, or anything that he had to regret, or anything he would have done differently. Everything was done, and satisfactorily done. We have to lament over our poor performances and partial successes. What a rebuke to the desultory lives we are leading! May the Lord God help us to undertake and complete something for his glory. Our Christianity is more spasmodic than systematic. I wonder how many pet "schemes" we have buried in that vast cemetery of the past. Don't let's dig any more new graves; let's start something for Christ—and stick to it.—Dr. Griffin W. Bull, in Daily Reminders from John's Gospel.

Do not Take Them out of Trouble. The prayer was, "Do not take them out of trouble, preserve them in trouble, and train them." The reason he did not let them all go with him was he had much to do *on* them. They were not ready for departure. They had barely begun their training; they had made some progress, but they were a long way from perfect. Then, too, he let them stay because he had much to do *through* them. They had to publish his story, to write gospels and letters, to witness to every fact of his glorious career. All this had to be done before they could be honorably taken home. Heaven and halos and harps could afford to wait, but the world could not get along without them; they had to lend a hand down here. You just stay as long as God wants you to and serve on. As long as you are here he looks on you as indispensable men—do not disappoint him.—Dr. Griffin W. Bull, in Daily Reminders from John's Gospel.

This is Life Eternal. Not long ago, the body of a young girl was washed ashore near Kronstadt, in Russia. In her pocketbook was a carefully folded note—her message to the world.

"We people of the twentieth century are without faith, without hope, without the desire to live. No Christ, no socialism, no humanity—nothing exists for us save thought, and thoughts lead to suicide."

At about the same time, a young woman in Japan was writing to the minister of education; in her questions ring the same note of despair.

"1. What is the aim of life?

"2. If life has no definite aim, and if, consequently, there can be no standard or rule of life, why fetter men and women with the bonds of law and religion? Why not let them commit crime and rebel at pleasure?"

From every corner of the world the same bitter questions come. Never before have so many young people asked them. Never, perhaps, has there been so much conscious suffering in the world.

And the answer? While the young Russian girl was going her sad way through the darkness, a group of her fellow countrymen were patiently struggling to learn English in one of the East Side parishes in New York. But the strange words baffled them, and they begged a missionary to read to them from some English book, to train their ears to the difficult sounds. He began reading from the Gospels, his pupils following with the Russian text. He read a few verses over and over with clear emphasis, until they grasped not only sounds but meaning. Into the intent faces of his pupils came a deepening surprise, until finally one of them exclaimed:

"Oh, how wonderful that is! I never knew the Gospels had anything like that. I would sit here for hours waiting for you, even if you could only read for ten minutes."

And in Japan, where young women as well as young men are questioning the necessity of law and righteousness, a Christian Japanese has for thirty years been carrying on a work among prisoners and criminals, providing homes for them, helping them to work, teaching them of God. More than eleven hundred have been helped by him; he has had no time to question the use of life.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." For nineteen hundred years no other answer to life's mystery has been found. For nineteen hundred years men and women who have tried the way of friendship with God have found their question answered.—The Youth's Companion.

I Pray not that Thou Shouldest Take them from the World, but that Thou Shouldest Keep them from the Evil One. In the furnace room I saw a spider letting herself down from the ceiling into the coal bin. Down and down in jerks she went until she disappeared into the blackness of the coal. As far as my eyes could tell, she was lost in the darkness; but as I watched I saw a slender, shining, gossamer rope swaying back and forth in front of the window. It was her anchor rope connecting her with her home above. In a few minutes I saw the swaying thread tremble and jerk, and up into the light of the window she came, climbing easily and quickly out of the darkness. She was not afraid, for, although she had gone far from home and deep into the darkness and uncleanness below, she had never once got out of touch with the light and the things above. She had kept hold of the anchor cord that was her safety and her way back home when her work below was done.

What a lesson there is for the child of God in the visit of the spider to the coal bin! It is not possible to keep out of danger all the time. It is not possible to live in the world without getting in the way of sin and going into places where there are darkness and uncleanness. The Master prayed that we should be kept from the evil, not that we should be taken out of the world. But safety for those who have gone down into darkness on the path of duty does not consist in their own strength or purity. It consists, like the safety of the spider, in the anchor chain that reaches to our home above. Sin and death may be about us on every side, but with our hand on Christ we are safe, for we have the way of escape. It is our "refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."—Condensed from The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. 1. Christ's habit of prayer.

2. We have all yet to learn how truly and vitally God's work of Grace upon human nature, in all its length and breadth and height and depth, is conditioned and made possible by man's prayer to God.—President W. D. McKenzie.

Questions for Pupils to Think About. 1. In what ways were Peter, James and John privileged disciples? 2. Why did Jesus want the three disciples near him in Gethsemane? 3. What did Jesus mean by "this cup"? 4. How was his prayer answered? 5. How would you answer Drummond's question, "Are we working out our common, everyday life on the great lines of God's will?"

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR HIS DISCIPLES

Beginning the Lesson. This prayer of Jesus for his disciples is the Holy of

Holies of the Gospels. We have heard Jesus talking to the people, to his enemies, to his closest friends. Now we hear him talking to the Father.

This is the true Lord's Prayer. The prayer which we usually call by that name might be called the Disciples' Prayer. This was his own prayer. He was ever a Man of prayer. It is only here, however, that we have the full text of one of his prayers.

The prayer was spoken aloud, for the sake of the disciples, verse 13. Here, indeed, was a school of prayer.

The calm prayer just preceded the bitter agony. Those who have great trials ahead of them would do well to make ready for them as Jesus did.—Dr. Robert E. Speer, in John's Gospel the Greatest Book in the World.

(Study The Text Explained and Illumined and in your own words explain this prayer as simply as possible to your pupils.)

The Result of a Child's Prayer. In a sermon preached in England, this effect of the prayer of a little child for a cab driver friend was related. The man crept quietly up the stairs to his little friend's room one day and heard these words as he neared the door: "Oh, Father, do not let him be drunken any more; he is so good and kind and I love him." The man knelt at the bedside on his knees and said to the lad through his tears, "Were you praying for a waif like me?" "Yes," said the boy, "I always do that. You're no waif, you're a man." And the man never forgot that night and that prayer; in the crowded streets, piloting his cab through the city, the words winged with love, rang in his ears like joy bells, "You're no waif: you're a man," till the refrain made him stand true, borne into manhood through a child's simple prayer.

Praying Hands Dürer

How Prayer for Others is Effective. One day recently when I was in conversation with a young man in his early twenties, he introduced the subject of prayer. "Do you think it does any real good to pray for a fellow that's going to the devil as fast as he can—drink and all that? It seems as if we had done about everything we could for him." I said, "Yes, I think it would." "How?" he asked. "How would it work, I mean how could *it* do what his family's pleadings and his own resolutions and everything have failed to do? You see, I was asked to be one of six fellows to pray for him specially, and it set me thinking—sometimes I doubt the whole thing."

I replied that I was in the dark as to the *process*, that I had spent a good deal of time trying to think out how prayer of individuals could release the power of God on behalf of another individual. I asked him if he had happened to read the article in the "Scientific American" on the wireless telephone. He had not, so I took it from my scrap envelope and the marvel of it impressed him as it had me. We tried to realize what it must have meant to those groups of men who at San Francisco, at San Diego, off the Atlantic Coast, waited to see if the antennæ which they had constructed could catch the message We *felt* the awe of the moment as we read the description—then the triumph when each of the groups, thousands of miles apart, received clearly the message from New York. We read of their joy when next day by cable they learned that far away in the Pacific, by means of makeshift antennæ, Hawaii had picked up the message! We looked into the face of the research engineer and the men who had made the miracle possible by patiently searching out the *laws* of God and *using* them. We discussed the wonders that have been revealed, that are a part now of our daily routine life, that have come to us because of the patient, unceasing toil of research men. We read again the striking sentence: "Our research men are giving their every energy to the discovery of law, that they may make it available for their fellow men." I told my young friend that I believed that we needed in our religious life today, more than anything else, research men and women willing to *pay the price* of discovery in the realm of religion; the discovery of the laws of God, that they might be made available for the needs of the souls of men. I said I wished that he might be "a research man," to discover more and more of God, and that I felt that prayer is *the* source of discovery. After a moment he said he thought it was a fine way to look at it—just to believe that it was not God who could not do things, but we who hadn't found out how to

help, or to make use of what God can do.—Miss Margaret Slattery in The Pilgrim Teacher.

What Prayer for Others May Do. The knowledge of what prayer may do for others, even for those whom one does not know, was brought home to one young girl when traveling. Her family had prayers together every morning before starting on their sight-seeing. In Paris they shared a sitting-room with a stranger, and here this young girl constantly feared the stranger would open her door some day and find them all on their knees.

A few years later a stranger introduced herself to her at a social gathering, and asked her to thank her father for what he had done. "I was all alone in Paris and in great trouble," she said; "I had no one with whom to consult, and I was in desperate need of help. A little more,—a step or two,—and I should have ruined my life. Every morning your father prayed in the sitting-room. He prayed for the strangers far away from home, for the tempted ones, the lonely ones—he prayed for me. I was on my knees in my room that led off from your sitting-room. His prayers gave me strength to resist my temptation. Your father saved my life."

Dr. W. J. Dawson in speaking about the revival in Wales, said: "In one instance known to me a simple farmer and his wife unlocked the door of a humble chapel in a lonely hillside, and began there to pray for their neighbors by name, until in a fortnight, drawn by an invisible compulsion, more than fifty persons came to this unadvertised meeting and yielded themselves to Christ."

A Bit of Experience. "I had just passed my sixteenth birthday when I joined the church," a middle-aged business man said recently, "and I took the step as thoughtfully as could be expected of a boy of that age.

"I read a few verses from the Bible each night and morning, and prayed for the strength I needed to live a Christian life. My prayers weren't a mere form of words, either, for I varied them according to circumstances. If I had a school examination coming on, I asked God to help me prepare for it as I should, and if I had done something during the day that I felt was wrong, I mentioned it, and prayed God to forgive me and keep me from doing it again.

"After a year or so I began to have the disquieting suspicion that I was not 'making good' in my Christian life. I didn't do things to bring reproach on my profession, and I was regular in my prayers and my church attendance. But I seemed to be losing interest. When I entered college it wasn't easy to 'take a stand' in my new surroundings, and for some time I didn't let it be known that I was a church member.

"One afternoon the fellow I roomed with had a bad fall in the gymnasium. There was no infirmary then, so he was carried to our room, more dead than alive. The injury didn't prove very serious in the end, but the blood gushed out of his nose and mouth, and the physician we called wasn't the reassuring sort. I shall never forget the terror in my roommate's wide eyes as he put out his hand to me and whispered:

"'Wilson, I—I wish you'd pray for me.'

"We were alone, and I knelt down and said something aloud to God about helping my friend, and he seconded it with a hearty 'Amen.' I was surprised to see the change in him from that moment, but I was more surprised at the change in myself. That faltering prayer—not two minutes long—seemed to open to me the whole wide vista of intercession. I saw that my Christian faith had languished because I had shut it into myself and had never prayed enough for others. Every Christian ought to be sustained by the prayers of all other Christian people, and I had not borne my share. That was for me a real spiritual discovery, and I believe that the frightened request of my classmate saved me from losing my grip and sinking into apathy and indifference."—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

Scarcely have I asked in prayer
That which others might not share.—Whittier.

We may test the quality of our longings for the good of others by the nature of the requests we make for them at the throne of grace.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

The most Christ-like prayer is prayer for others.—Dr. Alexander MacColl.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson.
1. Where was Gethsemane? 2. At the arrest what did Peter do to defend Jesus? 3. Why did Jesus rebuke him? 4. What did all the disciples do after the arrest?

JESUS IN GETHSEMANE

GOLDEN TEXT: Not what I will, but what thou wilt. Mark 14.36

LESSON Mark 14.32-42 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 22.1-8

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 26.36-46; Luke 22.39-46; John 18.1, 2

MARK 14.32 And they came unto a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly amazed, and sore troubled. 34 And he saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: abide ye here, and watch. 35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. 36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt. 37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest thou not watch one hour? 38 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 39 And again he went away, and prayed, saying the same words. 40 And again he came, and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they knew not what to answer him. 41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough; the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Arise, let us be going: behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. CHRIST'S AGONY IN GETHSEMANE, verses 32-36.

"Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent,
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame" (Sidney Lanier).

In the woods of Gethsemane Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit ye here, while I pray."

"Doubtless prayer and fellowship are not tied to any locality. Jesus was as near to the Father in Jerusalem as anywhere; he did not require the sights and sounds of the Garden to recall God to his mind; but is it not significant that even he turned in the hour of his spiritual conflict to the place at which for some time he had been accustomed to be specially conscious of God's presence? Human experience generally finds it helpful to employ this practice of devotion" (Dr. James Moffatt).

Jesus took with him the three privileged disciples, Peter, James and John, and began to be greatly amazed (sorrowful, says Matthew) and sore troubled. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," he said to the three disciples. "Though Jesus had long known, and had often with realistic plainness spoken of, what was to befall him, yet the vivid sense of what it all meant came upon his soul at this hour, as a sudden appalling revelation" (Expositor's Greek Testament).

"Jesus's humanity was never more plainly shown in all the three and thirty years he lived on earth, than during those few hours in Gethsemane. He was 'sore amazed.' We are often inclined to think that he was never perplexed, never in doubt about the future, never uncertain about his Father's will and purpose. Our perplexities are among our greatest tribulations. We are amazed at the prevalence of evil in the world, at the sufferings of good people, at the enormous waste of life in war and pestilence, and we cry out in our amazement, 'How long, O Lord, how long?' It is comforting to know that in such matters, too, our Lord was tempted in all points like as we. He, too, was 'very weary,' and 'exceeding sorrowful,' and in our sad hours, when our burdens seem heavy to be borne, and our griefs beyond endurance, we can turn to this episode in our Master's life and say to ourselves, 'He knoweth our frame, for he suffered a man's perplexities and griefs'" (Francis E. Clark).

"Abide ye here; and watch," was Jesus's request to his disciples. "His trouble was beyond their depth: what could they do? What can a little child do, that looks up into the face of the mother, and sees her tears dropping one by one, and knows not what ails her, and still less knows how to comfort her, and can only once in a while climb up into her lap and say, 'Don't cry, mother'? The heart of Jesus in his great trial would have been comforted if those whom he loved and

who loved him were present with him, and were in sympathy with him" (H. W. Beecher).

"Is it stretching the thought underlying to believe that he still craves our companionship as well as desires our love? This thought puts a new meaning into prayer, and irradiates the Quiet Hour with a new life. When we commune with our Master it is not going to a confessional to whisper something into the ear of a high priest whose duty, but not whose pleasure, it is to listen to us. We are coming to one who loves to have us approach him. We may be stupid and sleepy and may comprehend very little of his character or mission, yet he says, 'Tarry ye here and watch with me, for I need you.' We rightly dwell upon our infinite need of him, on the blessedness of his friendship, on the joy of his presence; but friendship demands two people at least, joy cannot be shared without a companion, and unshared joy is not joy, even for the Savior of mankind" (Dr. Francis E. Clark).

"When the soul enters its Gethsemane, it withdraws a stone's cast from its most trusted friends": Jesus went forward a little, a stone's cast, says Luke, and falling on the ground he prayed that if it were possible (because in accord with his Father's will) "the hour," the fate awaiting him, might pass away from him. "Abba, Father (*Abba* is the Aramaic for *Father*), all things are possible unto thee," he cried; "remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt." In Ps. 75.8 "the cup" is the portion of judgment; in Ps. 23.5, of mercy or blessing; here, of suffering and bearing the sins of the world on the cross. (See other interpretations under The First Topic). It was Christ's will that the Father's will be done. "As Christ was God and Man, there were in him two wills, a human will and a divine will, and the former did not always conform itself to the latter without an inward struggle: compare Jn. 5.30; 6.38" (Dummelow). See the addition here in Lk. 22.44, and see Heb. 5.7,8.

"Blessed be he who, following Christ into Gethsemane, follows him out by the same door—the door of a supreme consecration to his Father's will; the door of a prayer which seeks not to change the divine will to the human, but the human to the divine will" (Dr. Lyman Abbott).

"The petition of Jesus at this supreme moment was not granted. The cup did not pass from him. He drank it to the dregs. And yet we complain when in our careless morning prayer we ask for fair weather and health or personal success, because we do not get just what we ask for, and when we ask for it!"

II. THREE FAITHLESS DISCIPLES, verses 37-41. On returning to the three disciples, Jesus found them sleeping instead of watching. Peter had promised most, had been so confident of his loyalty, Mark 14, and to him Jesus said, "Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." The temptation immediately before the disciples was to forsake and deny their Lord.

"It is strangely full of warning to me that the three men who here could not watch for one hour were the same three who had been, more closely than any, associated with the Master many times before; who, alone of the band, had been with him on the holy mount, and had seen his glory there; who alone had been witnesses of his power in raising the daughter of Jairus to life; one of them, too, the man who had made loudest profession of willingness to die for him; another, the man who most profoundly loved him, and at the supper leaned upon his breast. I see here, then, that there are some disciples from whom the Master expects more than he does from others, and that these are just the disciples who have had the loftiest privileges, and have made the loudest profession of loyalty and love. I see, too, that as I am never more likely to err in judgment than when I think myself most wise, so I am never more ready to slip with my feet than when I am saying, 'I shall never be moved' " (G. H. Knight).

Lovingly Jesus added, in apology for the faithless disciples, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." "This exquisite blending of reproach and apology breathes the fine sensibility and magnanimity of our Lord" (W. A. Grist).

"How our hearts rise gratefully to him in his sympathy for these poor sleepers! We know what we should say in our hurt at such desertion. 'Much you care about me and my trouble!' Not so Jesus. He knew them

too well. He knew that it was not that they did not care, but that they were tired men, dead tired after the strain of that day. That is the Jesus to whom we can turn, who can see the good in us when all misunderstand" (J. Paterson Smyth).

A second and a third time Jesus went away and prayed and returned to find the disciples sleeping. Intense sorrow sometimes mercifully induces sleep, as many a one has experienced. "Again and again the Sufferer comes wandering back to where the tired and unconscious men are lying. It is as if one who was passing through some deep experience might go into the chamber where a child was sleeping and find relief when the burden of the solitary crisis was too great to bear" (Phillips Brooks). "Sleep on now, and take your rest," said Jesus at last.

"If we sleep through the hour for duty, we may as well sleep on after the hour. Waking then will not avail to accomplish that which we were set to do. There are many applications of this principle. Whatever we do for our friends, we must do when they need our help. If one is sick, the time to show our affection and our sympathy is while the sickness continues and not after the friend is well again" (Dr. J. R. Miller).

III. ONE DISCIPLE'S BASENESS, verses 41-46. "What if the disciples slept? What if all men slept? Christ was no longer alone. He was content to suffer, content to die. He had found his peace under the hammerstroke of anguish. Now he can listen almost longingly for the footsteps of Judas. For a time he hears only the beating of his own heart, so much calmer than at first, now that the horror is nearer. But after some moments, he hears approaching the sound of cautious shuffling, and there among the bushes which border the road red flickerings of light appear and disappear in the darkness. They are the servants of the assassins who are following Iscariot along the path. Jesus turns to the disciples, still asleep. 'Behold the hour is come; rise, let us go. Lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand'" (Giovanni Papini).

"Christ knew that his murderers were coming. He might have done a number of things to have avoided them. There is not much virtue in standing when we cannot possibly escape. He might have kept away from the Garden that night—it would have been just as easy for him to have gone somewhere else. He might have escaped before they reached him—his listening ear had caught the sound of their approaching feet, and under cover of the friendly trees he could have escaped. He might have disappeared from their midst—he had done that before. What he did do was to go out and meet his enemy more than half-way, and to introduce himself. Did you ever try that way of meeting trouble? Try it. The kiss of Judas was unnecessary; Jesus introduced himself. Such manhood is more than a match for the combined meanness of the world. Christ went with them because he was *willing* to go —they could not take him" (Dr. Griffin W. Bull).

"Out of the woods my Master went,
And he was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame" (Sidney Lanier).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When did Christ utter the words of our last week's lesson? What was his mood at the time?

The Intercessory Prayer and the Agony in the Garden. "The triumphant tone of the High Priestly Prayer has seemed to some to be inconsistent with the synoptical account of the agony in the Garden, which took place almost immediately afterwards. To meet this objection Bishop Westcott aptly remarks: 'All human nature bears witness in common life to the naturalness of abrupt transitions from joy to sadness in the contemplation of a supreme trial. The absolute insight and foresight of Christ makes such an alternate even more intelligible. He could see, as man cannot do, both the completeness of his triumph and the suffering through which it was to be gained.'"

The Preparations of Judas. It was perhaps soon after Jesus taught his disciples true greatness by his object lesson of washing the disciples' feet, that Judas left the company in that upper room in Jerusalem and probably went directly to the priests to tell them that now was the time to arrest his Master "subtly," as they had wished. Either he had learned that Jesus would later go with his disciples to the Garden of

Gethsemane, or from his knowledge of Jesus's habits felt confident that there he would be found. John says that Judas knew the place, for Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples. While Jesus was agonizing in the Garden, the Roman soldiers were girding on their swords and the temple guard were arming themselves with staves and clubs. When they reached Gethsemane, Jesus's mental struggle was over. Like a Victor he went forward to meet the traitor.

Peter's Rash Act and Jesus's Rebuke. "Whom seek ye?" Jesus asked. "Jesus of Nazareth," was the reply. "I am he." Before such calm courage, conscious innocence and majestic mien, the officers quailed. A second time Jesus asked the question and received the same answer. "I told you that I am he," he said, and reminded them that they had come for him alone, and not for his disciples. Impulsive Peter now drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, a steward of the high priest. "Put up the sword," said Jesus to him. "The cup which the Father hath given me to drink shall I not drink it?" Then they seized and bound him and led him away to Annas, the High Priest. All the disciples fled.

For the Blackboard. *Friday, April 7.* Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane about Midnight. Betrayal and Arrest. (Continued on page 87.)

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The narrow Kidron Valley winds around the eastern side of Jerusalem and beyond it is the Mount of Olives on whose slope lay Gethsemane. John (18.1) calls it a garden: an Oriental garden consists of fruit trees, shade trees, or shrubs rather than

The Garden of Gethsemane

of flowers or vegetables. The word *Gethsemane* means *oil-press*. The Garden was an orchard of olive trees.

There are two traditional Gardens, side by side at the base of the Mount of Olives; one belongs to the Latins, the other to the Greeks. A section of the one cared for by the Franciscan monks is illustrated here, with its cypress trees and olive trees and shrubbery that separates the flower beds. The Franciscan monk is one of its caretakers. The olive trees have been here since the first tax was collected on fruit trees (636); their gnarled trunks resemble granite rather than wood. Ruskin's description of the olive trees is perfect:

"I do not want painters to tell me any scientific fact about olive trees. But it had been well for them to have felt and seen the olive tree; to have loved it for Christ's sake. To have loved it, even to the hoary dimness of its delicate foliage, subdued and faint of hue, as if the ashes of Gethsemane's agony had been cast upon it for ever; and to have traced, line by line, the gnarled writhing of its intricate branches, and the pointed fretwork of its light and narrow leaves, inlaid on the blue field of the sky, and, more than all, the softness of the mantle, silver gray, and tender like the down on a bird's breast, with which, far away, it veils the undulation of the mountains."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
LESSONS FROM GETHSEMANE

Beginning the Lesson. The Garden of Gethsemane was a quiet place where Christ could get close to the Father, where the disciples could have heart-to-heart talks with their Master. Great is the power of association. Is not the first lesson for us, then, the thought that we, too, need our Gardens, or secluded spots that are trysting places with the Lord? Ponder these words of Dr. John R. Mott: "The more fully his life of unbroken communion, as well as his going apart for special intercession and his agonizing in the Garden on behalf of the world are studied, the more deeply will the Church enter into the secret of overcoming the world. Our duty to our generation involves a sense of spiritual responsibility that will open a Gethsemane wherever there is a Christian."

Explanations of the Agony in Gethsemane. The customary explanation is that it was the sins of the world which Jesus bore.

"Toward the garden called Gethsemane
We turn our faces and our steps today
And wait in hushed and pitying grief apart,
While Christ takes the world's sins upon his heart!
For this he came—the Child of Bethlehem!
To meet this hour he trod strange, toilsome roads,
Misunderstood, despised, hated and feared,
He takes at last the heaviest of all loads—
To bear for others punishment and pain,
And so redeem the world for God again!"

A noted preacher believes that Jesus was pondering the question as to what his Father wished him to do. Could his mission survive that catastrophe of his death? Could those timid, half-educated fishermen carry on his work? His anguish was not dread of the tragedy of the morrow. Many a soldier in the late war has faced unhesitatingly greater physical pain and one longer continued. His was the greater dread of a greater tragedy—dread lest he fail to understand his Father's will, or fail in courage to achieve that will. His prayer was that this tragedy he might escape."

Bishop Phillips Brooks gives another interpretation below.

Lessons from Gethsemane. Our text is the history of a conflict. We can see in it the struggle that goes on in Jesus's nature. He was the Son of Man, the Lord of Life. We feel instinctively that life must have been in him the most complete thing possible. And if life were preëminent in him, then the love of life, too, must have asserted itself preëminently, and even in the midst of all his sufferings and sorrows the Lord must have clung to life and dreaded death with all the power of that great unreasoning instinct which has always made the most miserable of living things wail as if at a new misery when you threatened it with death.

How strange it was! After looking it in the face for years on earth, the death, when it came, seemed to take the Savior by surprise with its suddenness. But as with him, so it must always be. No man can know a duty till it lights itself up with an immediate necessity, and then it will almost always surprise and awe him with its unexpected presence. We have all seen men led of God up to something which they have got to do. No matter what it be—the giving up of some bad habit, we will say, the adoption of some new self-sacrificing mode of life, the lifting of one of those heavy bundles of outward dis-esteem or inward sorrow which God lays sometimes in the middle of a man's path for him to take up and carry on his bent back thenceforth until he dies—no matter what it be, a man never meets a great duty of the active or the passive sort that it does not take him by surprise.

He shrinks from it. "These things are not for me," he says. "My life is not strung to great achievement or great patience. My heart is not heroic. I am well enough for little work; I shall fail here. O Duty, go and find some other soul to dare thee. I would, but I cannot. O God, I am too weak! Let me go free; I cannot lift thy burden. Father, save me from this hour." Never a Moses came up yet singing his triumph at the head of his hosts, through the piled waters of the conquered sea, but that same voice that sings the *Jubilate* has begged beside the burning bush of his election that another and not he might speak to Pharaoh and bring the people out.

The struggle which our Lord passed through will always be the struggle of every life before it is reconciled to the necessity of death. Man loves to live and hates to die. It is not wrong. It is a part of his humanity. It is one development of his instinct of self-preservation. I believe that with every well, healthy man, with work to do in the world, an intense desire to live and do it, an intense dislike at the thought of giving it up and going away, is the healthiest and most Christian state; that any other condition is for him unhealthy and unchristian, however pious and devotional it may appear. When death rises up suddenly, full in the path of a live, vigorous man, and puts its cold hand out to draw him to itself, I believe the natural cry of the true human heart is, "Father, save me from this hour." And even when sickness comes, and the work has to be laid aside, and the road is evidently inevitably sloping downward to the grave, still the life fears to die. The last enemy has still his terrors.

Paul tells of Christians who "through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage." There are some men and women who haunt their lives and make them cheerless, for fear they will not be able to meet the king of terrors when he comes. Dear friends, learn from your Savior that no duty reveals itself till we approach it. The duty of death, when you approach it, will light itself up, you may be sure, and seem very easy to your soul. Till then do not trouble yourself about it. To live, and not to die, is your work now. When your time comes the Christ who conquered death will prove himself its Lord.

What is Submission, through Prayer, to the Will of God? It is more than a rising toward God's plan. It is a *joyful acceptance of the best.*

When, through prayer, we contemplate the divine will, our spirits rise and expand. A new faith is born in us. We look upon God's will as we pray; and we see that we are able to receive it. If we keep on praying, we attain a second stage: we long to receive it. Hard and painful as it looked a moment ago, its beauty and joy are revealed. Its very sorrow and difficulty are reasons for desiring to receive it. To this second stage, only one more can be added: we do receive it. By prayer, we know our capacity; by prayer, we attain the desire; by prayer we receive into our lives the will of God. And that is not submission so much as it is the joyful acceptance of the best that can be, the eternal will of God for our lives.

The summary of this process is shown in Christ's prayer in Gethsemane. Christ prayed with the simplicity of a child that the Father would take the cup of suffering away. He asked for the boon which his human flesh craved. As he prayed we may be sure that even he who was with God and in God, God himself, became more intimately united with the Father. In that prayer he may have seen first the vision of what it would mean for the world if he evaded the suffering and escaped to a painless peace—and then the other vision, the vision by which his cross was to be the solution and inspiration of every righteous tragedy down the years of history, to cast a light across every hard path, to point every trembling and fearful spirit to the exact right and to give the power of an everlasting victory. Then he said, "Nevertheless not my will but thine be done," not with negative resignation, but with the joyful acceptance of the best that could be for the world and for him. I think that if those Roman soldiers who led him down the hill after his arrest had held their torches to his face, they would have seen there such joy as never was written on any face before or since—the joy of accepting God's best.—Condensed from Why Men Pray, by Dr. Charles Lewis Slattery.

Not What I Will, but What Thou Wilt. "To speak frankly, the symptoms as the crisis approaches are not so favorable as I had hoped for."

It was hard for John Brooks to realize that the great specialist was speaking of Jack—Jack, his first-born, whom he had watched through babyhood and boyhood, and through love of whom he had been brought to a new sense of God's goodness; Jack, who had been his pride all these twenty years, and in whom were centered his dearest hopes for the future.

Dazed, John Brooks turned away, and entered his library. He closed and locked the door. "He *can't* die!" he said, doggedly. "I can't *let* him die!"

He had a curious feeling that there was something he could do about it, if he could only collect himself and think clearly. "All that medical skill can do has been done," he said to himself. "Is there anything else?"

Of course there was! Had he not known all his life that there is a God in Israel? A God to whom nothing is impossible? What could be more natural or right than that he should ask God to save his boy, whose life the world must surely need? He would pray as the saints of old prayed, with invincible determination; with a persistence that could not be denied, and God would grant his prayer.

He fell upon his knees. But before he could frame the words, he seemed to hear a Voice speaking. He listened.

"Your prayer is granted. Your son's life will be spared. But I had a different future for him. There is work elsewhere that he can do. There are dangers threatening here that he can never avoid. There are heights elsewhere that he would have reached. I had my plan. You may now have yours."

John Brooks rose trembling from his knees. "Not my will," he sobbed, "dear God, not mine!" Out in the hall the physician came from the sick-room to meet him.

"It's all right," the doctor whispered, as he grasped the father's hand.

"It's *always* all right!" said John Brooks from his heart.—The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. 1. The surprise of Jesus. He seems to be as much surprised as if he expected to find his disciples awake. However Jesus may know that his disciples will fail him and sleep while he is struggling, there is a perfect conviction of their weakness which can come to him only when he actually sees them lying helpless on the ground; and when that perfect conviction comes, it is a shock and a surprise. There is a fullest knowledge of all the things which touch us closest which can come to us only with their actual touch. For days and days you have known that your friend must die. You stand by his bedside listening for his last gasp. At last he dies; and, oh, you all know how suddenly death comes even to all those who think they are expecting it most surely. Of all the closest things there is a closest knowledge which cannot come until the touch is actually laid upon the quivering nerve. This truth seems to me to throw light upon some things in the experiences of Jesus which sometimes puzzle us. There is a kind of knowledge of Judas's treason which not even Jesus can have till he feels the cold kiss of the traitor on his cheek; there is a knowledge of Herod's scorn and of the Jews' hatred which the divine heart cannot gather except out of the sneering lips and flashing eyes of his persecutors in the hour of their triumph.—Phillips Brooks.

2. What bearing do our prayers have upon God's will?

Questions for Pupils to Think About. 1. Do Paul's words counsel one to obey a law which violates a law of God? 2. How is a Christian to behave as a political subject? 3. How do you regard one who fails to obey the eighteenth amendment? 4. How can that law be better enforced? 5. How does love fulfil the law? 6. What does it mean to "put on the Lord Jesus"?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
CHRIST'S PRAYER IN THE GARDEN

Beginning the Lesson. They had to go carefully in that midnight walk lest they be tracked to their retreat, for danger was around them and treachery was in the air. Peter remembers one pathetic incident as they moved through the shadows. He had good cause to remember it, and St. Mark heard him tell it often in later days.

"All ye," said Jesus, "shall be offended because of me this night, as it is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered." Their hearts sank within them. Was it not bad enough that one should be a traitor? Did he mean that they would scatter and leave him in danger? Peter cannot stand this.

"If every one should be offended, Lord, yet will not I!"

"Peter, this very night before the cock crow thou shalt three times deny that thou knowest me."

No wonder the horrified Peter should vehemently reply, "If I were to die with thee I would not deny thee." Likewise also said they all.

The Master in silence lets it pass. He is in no mood for talking now. An awful oppression of soul is upon him. He has borne up for a long time. He can bear it no longer. There is a terrible conflict before him and the instinctive craving is on him for solitude and prayer. And yet—how it touches one's heart—that natural human

desire for some friendly heart near him! "I must go yonder and pray. But don't be very far from me. Keep near me, you three, and watch with me."

Then from the frightened three he hurries forward about a stone's throw into the shadows. He must be on his knees. The crisis of his destiny is on him.

We would veil our faces before the eternal Christ struggling in his mysterious agony. But it is meant that we should see. He is on his knees now with his face to the ground and the sweat like great drops of blood gathering on his brow and from his tortured soul goes up that cry of uttermost agony—many a stricken soul has prayed it since then: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!"—J. Paterson-Smyth, in A People's Life of Jesus.

Continue with The Text Explained.

Watch and Pray. The night that Luther spent in prayer before he went to the Diet of Worms, Dr. D'Aubigné calls his Gethsemane. Luther knew that the agents of the Pope had decreed his death, he knew that his answer to the charges against him on the following day might seal his fate. In great anguish he sought the strength that comes only from prayer, and the next day as he boldly proclaimed: "Here I stand; I can do no other; so help me God," and thereby won the battle of the Reformation, he was the calmest man in all that great assembly.

"We kneel, how weak! We rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong;
That we are ever overborne with care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious, or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy, and strength, and courage are with thee?"

Not My Will, but Thine Be Done. "I shall never believe in prayer again," said a broken-hearted girl, as The Youth's Companion tells us. "If ever any one prayed in faith, I prayed that my mother might recover. But she died. Oh, how could God be so cruel?"

Wisely her friend answered. "There are few deaths, thank God, where no one present prays that the dear one may live. Do you suppose that the gift of prayer was given us in order that no one may ever die? Do you think God intended men to live on in growing infirmity till at last they prayed for death to save them from despair? If God gave us all we ask for—gave it to all men—we should never dare to pray. Prayer is a blessing because God knows best how to answer. God knows when to say no.

"You prayed. Thank God that you could pray. You prayed in hope, and even now you would not have it otherwise. Pray still, but pray in trust. Pray that God will give you strength for your present burdens, and light enough to follow in the path of duty, one day at a time. You said you could never pray again, but you will.

"There are no unanswered prayers. Pray that you may know your duty; pray for rest and hope and trust. With those will come peace and new courage, but not absence of sorrow. The peace and courage will enable you to bear the sorrow. That will be the answer to your prayer."

So with calmness of spirit the sad young woman faced the world again, and daily prayer gave her daily strength. In the deepening of her life and the strengthening of her character her friends discovered the answer to her prayers, even those that had seemed unanswered.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Great souls are always loyally submissive—reverent to what is over them; only small, mean souls are otherwise.—Carlyle.

What shall appear to be God's will, I will do.—Lincoln.

O Lord, grant that I may never seek to bend
The straight to the crooked, that is, thy will to mine;
But that I may ever bend the crooked to the straight,
That is, my will to thine.—St. Augustine.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who wrote the Epistle to the Romans? 2. Why do ministers often pray for those in authority? 3. What did Jesus say about paying tribute? 4. What did he himself do in regard to a tax? (Mt. 22.21). 5. Where in the Old Testament are the commandments given which Paul quotes? 6. What did Jesus say about the great commandment? (Mt. 22.36-40). 7. By what parable did Jesus teach the duty of loving one's neighbor? (Lk. 11.25-37).

GOOD CITIZENSHIP (TEMPERANCE LESSON)

GOLDEN TEXT: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Romans 13.9

LESSON Romans 13.1-14 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 72.1-8

REFERENCE MATERIAL Psalms 94.1-10; 101.1-8; 1 Peter 2.13-17

ROMANS 13 Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the *powers* that be are ordained of God. 2 Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: 4 for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore *ye* must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. 6 For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

8 Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. 9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.

13 Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO OBEY CIVIL AUTHORITY, verses 1-7. Writing to the Christians at Rome, Paul counsels every one to obey "the higher powers"—those in authority, the civil rulers—and then he lays down the principle that the fact of the authority's being established argues that it was ordained of God. Therefore he who defies the power is defying what has been instituted by God and shall be judged accordingly. "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Pet. 2.13).

"Civil government has its source in God, and all constituted power is appointed and ordained by him. The cruel abuses in governments are no necessary part of them, and do not invalidate their divine character any more than the abuses of marriage rob it of its sacredness. Any government is preferable to anarchy, just as poorly enforced marriage laws are better than none. Man abuses all God's gifts" (Dr. Stifler).

Rulers are divinely ordained for the punishing of wrong-doers and the rewarding of well-doers. Only those who do evil need fear the authorities. To be free from fear of the powers that be, do good. The Roman Empire at this time maintained law and order, protected life and property, and was, as Paul, himself a Roman citizen, believed, on the whole a beneficent power.

The inference is, of course, that when rulers are a terror to good works, when their laws violate Divine laws, then it is the Christian's duty to disobey them. Recall Blackstone's statement that "Any law that contravenes the Word of God is no law at all."

To the evil-doer, rulers are the agents of God, appointed for his punishment. Therefore render obedience, not only from fear, but because obedience is right. For he (the ruler) beareth not the sword in vain: "this refers not to the dagger worn by the emperor as emblem of his power, but to the sword by which criminals were executed, which was on certain occasions borne before the magistrate as a symbol of his authority to inflict punishment" (Dr. A. E. Garvie).

"If an individual sets himself to subvert the moral order of the world, then representatives can proceed to extremities against him, on the ground that it, as of God's institution, is of priceless value to mankind, whereas he in his opposition to it is of no moral worth at all" (Dr. James Denney).

You *must* be in subjection, Paul continues, not only because of the wrath of God that follows disobedience, but because of your own conscience which recognizes the right of the authority and the need of freely submitting to it.

"The passage before us is to be explained by the historical situation, when it was written. It lays down no absolute principles of the divine right of kings or the passive obedience of subjects. A government may become so oppressive and tyrannous that it practically ceases to discharge the functions of government, and so loses its authority and sanction as a divine ordinance, then the subjects are free to consider whether revolution or rebellion is not required by fidelity to truth and righteousness. As a rule, however, it is in the interests of morality and religion that, even though the rule of the government be not all that might be desired, its commands should be obeyed, unless conscience absolutely forbids, as when the Christians refused to offer divine honors to Cæsar" (Dr. A. E. Garvie).

For this cause, that is, for conscience' sake (verse 5), you pay tribute as well as obedience, for rulers are ministers of God's service, persevering faithfully in their official duties. "It seems to have been a matter of principle in the Christian church to pay taxes without question or complaint, probably in obedience to the command of Christ, Lk. 20.20-25." The right of civil authorities to obedience involves also the right to collect taxes, for they must be supported by the contributions of their subjects. The laborer is worthy of his hire, Lk. 10.7.

Next, Paul gives the general principle that all obligations must be met: Render to all their dues: tribute (taxes paid by subject peoples) to whom tribute is due; custom (ordinary taxes for the support of a government) to whom custom is due; fear (perfect obedience) to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

"There are men who think they are honest and upright, who would escape, if possible, the payment of their share of the expenses of the city, or of the State, in the payment for sidewalks, streets, or the protection of the police for their comfort—they would not pay what is their due" (Russell Conwell).

II. BY THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE THE CHRISTIAN FULFILLS THE LAW, verses 8-10. Let us pay all debts, Paul repeats. It is interesting to recall that our words *debt* and *duty* come (through two different French words) from the same Latin word *debere,* to owe. *Debere* is composed of *de* and *habere,* to have on loan. The love which we have from our God on loan is a debt, a duty, we owe to our brothers.

"'Owe no man anything' does not mean that you should not have a mortgage on your house, should not give a note, should not borrow money. It is the extremist who interprets things in that way. 'No man "owes" anything that isn't due, in a moral or religious sense.' That is the true interpretation. You are under no moral obligation to pay a man a note six months before it is due, but the day it becomes due you owe it, and this is what the Bible says we must not owe any man; it means that we must not have any overdue notes, any overdue promises, any unfulfilled pledges, which should have been paid before. Life becomes a continually harassing thing to a person who does owe. Any man or woman who owes what he cannot pay is in slavery. He who runs in debt without seeing that he is able to pay it when it becomes due, comes under the condemnation of God, so that he may be declared a thief. It is stealing, pure and simple, but by a roundabout method" (Russell H. Conwell).

Paul makes one exception to his rule that we must owe no man anything and that is a debt which can never be paid off, or cancelled, the debt of love which we owe one another.

"Is not the deepest, bitterest cry of many a heart—'Nobody cares for me'? There are hosts of men and women ready to give in, who could go bravely on in life's wind and rain, if somewhere a little bit of love waited for them to keep the heart warm" (Mark Guy Pearse).

For he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. The Greek word translated "neighbor" is given in the margin of the Bible as "the other." Love is a debt that we owe to humanity. Love works no ill to others. He who is ruled by love for his neighbor will not defraud him in the matters of purity, of life, of property. In giving the commandments which refer to one's duties to one's neighbors, Paul places the seventh before the sixth, as in Mk. 10.19; Lk. 18.20.

"If there be any other commandment" in regard to one's neighbors, Paul adds that "it is summed up in this word, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," Lev. 19.18. Love (personified here as in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians) breaks none of the commandments mentioned, love works no ill to his neighbor, love

therefore is the fulfilment of the law, for it leads to that conduct for which the law calls.

"Whoever will honestly seek to apply that negative precept of working no ill to others, will find it positive enough. We harm men when we fail to help them. If we can do them a kindness and do it not, we do them ill. Non-activity for good is activity for evil" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

III. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN AND THAT OF THE REPROBATE, verses 13, 14. Let us walk becomingly as in the day, Paul urges. It has been found that Paul speaks of conduct as "a walk" some thirty-three times. Let us cast off the works of darkness, Paul counsels in the twelfth verse, and then in the thirteenth verse he enumerates some of the works of darkness. "It is to be noticed that strife and jealousy are classed with the coarse indulgences of the animal nature and make a climax. The contentious, envious man ranks with the drunkard and the debauchee" (Dr. James Stifler).

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. To be *clothed with a person* is a Greek phrase, signifying to assume the interest of another, to enter into his views, to imitate him and be wholly on his side. Eusebius, in his Life of Constantine, says 'the sons put on their father'; they seemed to enter into his spirit and views, and to imitate him in all things. The mode of speech itself is taken from the custom of stage-players; they assumed the name and garments of the person whose character they were to act, and endeavored as closely as possible to imitate him in their spirit, words and actions" (Dr. Adam Clarke).

Evil thoughts are driven out by filling the mind with good thoughts; promptings to good deeds gain control of the will and then overcome the promptings to evil deeds. First put on the Lord Jesus Christ, keep him ever before you as a pattern, and you will be enabled to cast off the control of evil. It is a great thing to believe that Jesus is the perfect Pattern. It is a great thing to know and understand that wonderful Example. It is the greatest thing to seek earnestly to imitate his spirit in one's own life. Imitate him and you will do deeds of light rather than deeds of darkness.

"How constantly we are rushing into life with all its demands, half-dressed! When we are proud, we have left out Christ's humility; when we are morally weak, we have forgotten to put on Christ as our strength; when we fail in some temptation, we have failed to put on Christ as the complement to all demands; when there is lack in us of the sweetness, reasonableness, and loveliness of Jesus, it is because we have forgotten to put on his 'meek and quiet spirit.' Let us 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ,' and every part of his vesture—'the garments of salvation' as well as 'the robe of righteousness' " (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Paul wrote his letter to the Romans from Corinth, in all probability, toward the close of his Third Missionary Journey, shortly before he started on what proved to be his last journey to Jerusalem, 57 A. D. From Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire, the gospel might radiate to all the world, and Paul's heart claimed the world for Christ.

The main body of the Epistle divides naturally into two parts: the Doctrinal, Chapters I to XI; and the Practical, Chapters XII to XV.

Paul's Purpose in his Words about Loyalty to the Government. The Christians in Rome, though mainly Gentile, as this Epistle proves, were closely connected with the Jews, and the Jews were notoriously bad subjects. Many of them held, on the ground of Dt. 17.15, that to acknowledge a Gentile ruler was itself sinful; and the spirit which prompted Pharisees to ask, Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not? Shall we give or shall we not give? (Mk. 12.14) had no doubt its representatives in Rome also. As believers in the Messiah, "in another king, one Jesus" (Acts 17.7), even Christians of Gentile origin may have been open to the impulses of this same spirit; and unbalanced minds, then as in all ages, might be disposed to find in the loyalty which was due to Christ alone, an emancipation from all subjection to inferior powers.

The use made of the passage to prove the duty of "passive obedience," or "the right choice of kings to govern wrong," is beside the mark; the apostle is not thinking of such things at all. What is in his mind is that the organization of human

society, with its distinction of higher and lower ranks, is essential for the preservation of moral order, and therefore, one might add, for the existence of the Kingdom of God itself; so that no Christian is at liberty to revolt against that organization. Neither does he say anything on the divine right of insurrection. When he wrote, no doubt, Nero had not yet begun to rage against the Christians, and the imperial authorities had usually protected the apostle himself against popular violence, whether Jewish or pagan; but even of this we must not suppose him to be taking any special account. The whole discussion presupposes normal conditions: law and its representatives are of God, and as such are entitled to all honor and obedience from Christians.—Condensed from The Expositor's Greek Testament.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

You are engaged in the business of making statesmen. You are training the future citizens who will take their part in directing municipal and national affairs. If you are embuing them with worthy ideals, if you are leading them to order their lives in harmony with the law of love, then you are doing "your bit" toward establishing a good government wherein righteousness shall always reign.

Thomas Jefferson said, when the Sunday-school was new and was considered by some churchmen as a dangerous innovation, and when the French Revolution was a bigger danger than Bolshevism is today (as the Home Department Magazine reminds us), that "The Sunday-school provides the only legitimate means for avoiding the rock on which the French Republic was wrecked."

"We are making a mistake," declared James J. Hill, "to train our young people in all lines of knowledge and to give them the equipment of the college and university for undertaking the big tasks of life, without making sure also that those fundamental principles of right and wrong as taught in the Bible have become part of their equipment. There is a control of forces and motives which is essential to the management of the vast affairs of our nation which comes only through an educated conscience."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
OBEYING AND ENFORCING THE LAW

Beginning the Lesson. It has been well said by Professor Peabody that as one passes from the Synoptic Gospels to the Letters of Paul, he becomes aware of another climate of thought and hears another language of counsel and instruction. "The teaching of Jesus was persuasive, suggestive, illuminating; the teaching of Paul was didactic, hortatory, polemical. Jesus was a Seer; Paul was an advocate. Jesus synthesized life; Paul analyzed it."

It is indeed a chilling atmosphere into which one enters as he is plunged into the thirteenth chapter of Romans after being on the lofty heights of the fourteenth, fifteenth and seventeenth chapters of John and after hearing the prayer in Gethsemane as recorded in Mark. But no better chapter could be found for our temperance topic of Obeying and Enforcing the Law.

The Selfish Rich and the Prohibition Law. Selfishness is always bad and forever dangerous. When it is endowed, it becomes vastly multiplied in danger. And riches are easily selfish. Today only the rich can financially afford liquor. The poor are economically compelled to endure the life of a more law-abiding citizen.

Selfishness is always the foe of society. When selfishness is financed with a fortune it runs a dangerous career that menaces the whole of society.

A great nation is battling with the difficulties attendant upon the inauguration of a great reform. There are a great many men whose personal habits of years have been curbed by a law adopted for the good of all. Their clamoring habits find themselves doubly goaded because they are forbidden. At such a time for any company of people to indulge themselves in the consumption of that which many cannot have but which is sometimes available to those who can pay the price is little less than treason.

There is no lawbreaker for whom I have less tolerance than the one who poses as of the higher classes, whatever such classes be. I fear and despise the rich, cultured, privileged, selfish lawbreaker far more than I do the low, wretched denizen of the slums. Every man who breaks one law is a lawbreaker. "Rich" or "poor" are merely incidental qualifications. But the rich man, whose property holdings are absolutely dependent on the solubility of law, and who dares take liberty with the

law that collides with his selfish desire, is always the most dangerous anarchist among us.—Condensed from an Article in The Adult Bible Class Monthly, by M. S. Rice.

The Enemies of the Enforcement of the Prohibition Law. 1. Men who make liquor and secure illegally large amounts of money regardless of harm to property, life, and morals. These are worse than profiteers in the war.

2. Men who play politics and seek preferment and a share in the spoils of the liquor ring, which they offer freely. These are worse than ordinary bootleggers.

3. Men and women who put their own selfish indulgence and appetite before the welfare of their nation, the home, or the youth of our land. These are represented by the so-called Personal Liberty group.

4. Men and women who dread to come out and stand for an unpopular cause and who fear the accusation of narrowness more than they fear sin.

5. Pagans who never consider right or wrong, do not discriminate, are unmoral and too shallow to comprehend danger. This type is often found in so-called fashionable society.

6. The underworld. Turn over a stone and burrowing in the dirt and dark are creeping, crawling things. The criminal and desperate classes are hidden away, battening on the traffic for which some respectable people are contending.

7. A few conscientious men and women who have been misled by the immense amount of clever propaganda and who only need to be informed to change their present attitude to one of loyalty.

8. A very small proportion of young people, the would-be smart set, who exhibit those signs of adolescence in defying law which would be amusing if it were not so perilous. This is the hip-pocket group. Unfortunately, these people are not always young in years, but come under the class which Miss Ida Tarbell has characterized as the ungrown-up grown-ups.—Mrs. Henry W. Peabody, in the preface of Save America.

Obedience Comes First. The watchword of the Woman's National Committee for Law Enforcement is Matthew Arnold's prophecy that "If ever the world sees a time when women shall come together, purely and simply for the benefit and good of mankind, it will be a power such as the world has never known."

At the Convention of this organization held in Washington, President Coolidge said: "I sometimes wish that people would put a little more emphasis upon the *observance* of the law than they do upon its *enforcement*." Secretary Hughes wrote: "All citizens respect the laws they like. The test of devotion to our institutions is respect for law itself."

Mrs. Willebrandt, Assistant United States Attorney-General, gave this practical advice: "Let every delegate here become a positive force to inspire obedience to law. Let her definitely set social standards against serving liquors at parties and clubs."

There is more than the Eighteenth Amendment at Stake. We are in the fight today, not for an individual measure, but through a particular issue, for the very existence of the Constitution, of the Union, of the Government. A mighty evil, mad with its own power, purple with its own greed, and red with its own defiance of right and law, is doing its worst to destroy civil liberty, religious freedom, order under law, and the security of any right under the flag. For if lawlessness at this point be not destroyed it will destroy obedience to law at all other points, and with it the very nation itself. We have the eternal principle of the divided house right before our eyes again. The nation cannot exist half slave and half free, half drunk and half sober, half wet and half dry, half under law and half above it, half obedient and half defiant.

We have many classes in the United States. We have no classes that are exempt from the laws of the United States. We have many sections in our common country. But the flag flies over all alike, the laws of the country extend to all alike. We have many laws that we do not all or always like, but we have no classes that are privileged to choose whether they will regulate their obedience by their tastes or by their skill in defiance. Liberty under law is matched by the fundamental principle of quality before the law. That way our life as a nation lies.—Bishop William F. McDowell, in Law versus Lawlessness.

Law-Enforcement and "The People." While speaking of the enforcement of the present immigration law and the possible desirability of amending the law, President Coolidge stated that there was reason to believe that about one hundred thousand aliens annually "seep" into the country illegally. In comparison with

approximately two hundred and fifty thousand who enter under the provisions of the quota law, this is a large percentage of illegal entries. It appears that our Canadian and Mexican borders are no more impervious to this kind of seepage than to another sort which is more widely advertised. And yet we have not heard this fact interpreted as proving that "the people" are opposed to the immigration law. The aliens who smuggle themselves through and the citizens who assist them to do so are evidently not in sympathy with the law, at least as applied to themselves, and a very large percentage of other citizens are too indifferent or too inert to give any effective backing to the enforcement of the law. But the people in general, we suppose, are in favor of enforcing the present law so long as it is the law.

There are said to be more than a million drug-addicts in this country, and it is a known fact that, in spite of a strict law governing the sale of narcotic and habit-forming drugs, vast quantities are illegally imported and dispensed, and that the addicts, with locally varying degrees of difficulty, get their daily supplies. The use of morphine, cocaine and the like differs from the use of liquor in being necessarily regular. No one takes these drugs once in a while as occasion offers. Those who take them at all, take them regularly, and the quantity needed to keep the million supplied is enormous. Yet they get it. Are the people opposed to the law? We have never heard any one express such an opinion, in spite of the fact that it constitutes a most poignant invasion of personal liberty of those who have formed the habit. Only the people who buy it and the people who sell it are opposed to the law. They are a minority, but an interested and determined minority is always more than a match for an indifferent majority.

The wet-and-dry controversy involves the same principle. A vociferous minority, stirred to constant action by the motives of greed for gain or desire for personal indulgence, advertises its success in flouting the law and misnames itself "the people." If the people of this country were opposed to Prohibition there would not be lacking a major political party which would boldly propose the repeal of the law. Probably both of them would.—Editorial in The Christian Century.

We must have the Right Men to Enforce the Law. As Bishop William F. McDowell forcibly expresses it, "The enforcement of laws must be in the hands of men who believe in the laws they are sworn to enforce, and who will neither falter in their duty nor palter with their consciences; men whose palms will not itch for bribes, whose tongues will not blister with lies, whose arms will not be palsied with fear, whose minds will not be clouded with evasions."

When President Coolidge made his first address to Congress many friends of Prohibition were dissatisfied because he did not, as they thought, speak strongly enough for the measure. But he put his hand upon the very source of all our trouble as to the enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment when he said that the men appointed to carry out the law, those then in office as well as those thereafter to be appointed, should be subject to civil service regulations. When the spoils system is in force, and most of all when in force in regard to sumptuary laws, we do not have an honestly efficient force at work.

Suggestions for Service. 1. Coöperate with the present organizations in making their efforts more effective.

2. Discover the best community organizations which may be enlisted to make Law Enforcement and Citizenship a larger part of their regular programs.

3. Encourage the organization of a Citizenship Committee composed of the ablest men and women of the locality, which shall make this its specific task.

4. Form the acquaintance of the Federal, State and Municipal Enforcement officers and assure them of real sympathetic interest in their duties.

5. Encourage all kinds of public speakers, preachers and lecturers to make this topic one of frequent emphasis.

6. Encourage schools, colleges and universities to magnify the principles of temperance and good government to the fullest degree among all students.

7. Secure the facts about the beneficent results of Prohibition and give them wide publicity.—The Citizenship Conference, Washington.

For Discussion. 1. The duty of paying one's debts.

2. Nothing that is morally wrong can ever be politically right.—Gladstone.

3. The facts of Prohibition enforcement.

4. The Eighteenth Amendment can be enforced. "Strict enforcement of the liquor

laws, the laws against the sale of cigarettes to minors, the laws in regard to dance halls and pool rooms and moving pictures, needs the support of adult Bible classes."

Questions for Pupils to Think About. 1. What was the charge on which the Jews condemned Jesus? 2. Why did they change the charge when they brought him to Pilate? 3. Pilate lacked the courage of his convictions: do you? 4. What is your opinion of Pilate? 5. Of the mob? 6. Of the Jewish authorities? 7. Does a protest free one from responsibility for an evil which one could prevent?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
OBEYING THE LAW

Beginning the Lesson. What is our Golden Text? If we obey that law, shall we wish to have the temptation to drink liquor put in the way of men and women, boys and girls, who would become drunkards if they could get it? Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, Paul explains in his letter to the Romans; love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.

When was a law passed which made it illegal for any one in our nation to sell strong drink as a beverage? What do we call the law?

That was a fitting name which the early American Indians gave to strong drink—"fire water." The fire was put out by the Eighteenth Amendment to our Constitution, and although there are sporadic fires here and there, on the whole our great land is free from the evil. A writer in a Pennsylvania newspaper recalls the situation before the Eighteenth Amendment was passed:

"Do you ever pause in the great prohibition desert and conjure up a picture of the saloons that flourished in this country only a few years ago? Now and then men, passing a prominent corner, point to a savings bank or a new store, and say, 'There used to be a swell barroom here. I can remember when Old Crow was passed out at eighty-five cents a quart, and the barkeeper apologized for whiskey under seven years old.'

"By eight o'clock at night the regulars were well tanked, and below the din was the friend's apology: 'Don't mind him, he's a swell fellow when he isn't drunk.' The owl cars carried them home—to mothers and wives who sobbed quietly in the stillness of night. There was considerable privation in the average hard drinker's home, short on funds because of the barroom till's greedy appetite. A drunken man was disgusting to the good citizen and home-builder. A father's greatest fear was that his son would 'get the appetite.'

"There was another type of saloon—the low-down type that hard drinkers usually wound up in. It was a den, the rendezvous of criminals, where customers were thrown into the alley after they had been stripped of their last cent. The amber fluid in the quart bottle ruined brilliant men by the tens of thousands, wrecked an infinite number of homes, and, for those deeply involved, destroyed nearly everything for which life is worth living.

"The ancient institution, the openly conducted saloon, is gone. Now and then some one with more money than brains gets hold of a quart for twelve dollars or more. But fathers aren't worrying about their sons developing a chronic thirst. Homes are happier, with less jangling. There is more money in the bank. A woman can ride on an owl car now without danger of being insulted."

Bishop William T. Manning's Statements. I believe that Prohibition, properly enforced, will make us a healthier, a stronger, and a better people. We all know what our race has suffered through the evils of drink. We all know that if this evil can be suppressed, if we can have a generation that has not known it, this will mean the reduction of poverty, disease and crime among us.

For the possibility of such results as these to our country, and to our fellowmen, I think we should be willing to make such sacrifice of our personal liberties, or of our tastes, as is required.

Good Citizens. Everybody is ready to sustain the law he likes. That is not in the proper sense, respect for law and order. The test is that the law is upheld even though it hurts. And we can't afford in this country . . . to have a constitutional provision, which is the fundamental law of the land, ignored, betrayed. Therefore I say that what the people have said in their Constitution must be enforced, and it is the duty of the Legislature and the Governor and of the citizens to see to that enforcement. There should be no difference of opinion as to the importance of the faithful enforcement of the law by established agencies of administration.—Charles E. Hughes, Secretary of State.

Thomas A. Edison's Advice to Young People. I have never had time, not

even five minutes, to be tempted to do anything against the moral law, the civil law, or any law whatever. If I were to hazard a guess as to what young people should do to avoid temptation, it would be to get a job and work at it so hard that temptation would not exist for them.

What We can Do to Help in the Enforcement of the Law. In answer to the assertion that Prohibition creates a contempt for law, Professor Henry W. Farnam of Yale University, says: "I deny the statement. It does not create lawlessness, it merely reveals it. Let me illustrate my meaning by an example. I once had a friend who seemed to be the picture of health. He was ruddy, athletic and apparently able to do anything. But one day as he was walking up a moderately steep hill he suddenly felt distressed. He was obliged to go home, and his physician diagnosed a disease of the heart from which he died in a few years. The hill did not create heart disease, but it revealed it. It showed that even the moderate exertion involved was too much for a heart that was impaired. The Volstead Act has, I regret to say, revealed a lawless spirit in quarters where it was not suspected."

What can we do to help? Dr. John Timothy Stone recently told of one girl in Chicago who by refusing to have anything to do with young men with the smell of liquor upon them, had set a new moral standard among the social class in the society in which she moved. We can cease to be sympathetic with unfair criticism. We can beware of propaganda which is paid for by the liquor interests. We can also be good Americans and reverence the law.—Dr. Hugh T. Kerr, in The Westminster Teacher.

Putting on Christ. In olden times there was a very significant usage among the kings of Persia. On the coronation day every new Persian ruler put on a magnificent jewelled robe which the first Cyrus wore when he came to the throne. This was done to remind them that they should imitate the great father and founder of the empire. They were to copy his gracious temper, his excellent conduct, his noble patriotism; and their readiness so to do was declared by the act of putting on Cyrus's imperial robe.

To you and me St. Paul says, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." To do this, it is not enough that we take his name upon us and say, "I am a Christian—I belong to Christ." It is not enough that we adorn ourselves in an outward profession of Christianity, observing all the duties, forms and ceremonies of Christian worship. All this is meant, and much more. It means that we *live* the Christian life. That we try to be what Jesus was, to think as he thought, to feel as he felt, and, in the result, do as he did.

Was Jesus lowly, gentle, pure, prayerful? Was Jesus obedient, true, loving, unselfish, spending and sacrificing himself for the sake of others? We are to be like him.

How does the tree put on its beautiful garment of verdant leaves, its delicious clusters of precious fruit? How does the rose-bush put on its summer glory of delightful bloom, with sweet and refreshing fragrance? How does the electric lamp put on the brilliant glow that illumines a room or a city street? Tree, shrub, lamp are fed with a hidden life. They put on their beauty and glory, not from without, but from *within*.

So must it be with you and me. Then we shall put on meekness, goodness, purity, truth, love, as the trees put on their flowers and fruit, as the lamp puts on its sunlight glow. All the graces that are worth wearing will adorn our character and lives, for we shall find them all within us through the Spirit of Jesus Christ dwelling in our hearts.—Condensed from an article by A. A. Ramsey in The Sunday School Chronicle.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.—Jesus.

Loyalty to rulers is with me an essential branch of religion.—John Wesley.

Let reverence for law become the political religion of the nation.—Abraham Lincoln.

Free government has no greater menace than disrespect for authority and continued violation of law.—President Coolidge.

The law-abiding citizen is the loftiest patriot.—Dr. James Stifler.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the accounts in all the Gospels of the trials of Christ. 2. In what words did Judas who betrayed him declare Jesus innocent? (Mt. 27.3-5.) 3. Pilate who sentenced him? (Jn. 18.38.) 4. The soldiers who executed him? (Lk. 23.47.)

LESSON IX—MARCH 1

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE

GOLDEN TEXT: He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. Isaiah 53.5

LESSON Matthew 27.11-31 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 53.1-6

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 26.57 to 27.10; Mark 14.53 to 15.20; Luke 22.52 to 23.25; John 18.12 to 19.16

MATTHEW 27.11 Now Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. 12 And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. 13 Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? 14 And he gave him no answer, not even to one word: insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. 15 Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the multitude one prisoner, whom they would. 16 And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. 17 When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? 18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up. 19 And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. 20 Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. 21 But the governor answered and said unto them, Which of the two will ye that I release unto you? And they said, Barabbas. 22 Pilate saith unto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ? They all say, Let him be crucified. 23 And he said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, saying, Let him be crucified. 24 So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye *to it*. 25 And all the people answered and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children. 26 Then released he unto them Barabbas; but Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. PILATE QUESTIONS JESUS, verses 11-14. Now Jesus stood before the governor. "When the King walked away with his captors he did it because he was willing, not because he was helpless. What a combination runs through his life! Humiliation and glory are always associated—you never find one without the other. He was born a weak infant—yet archangels attended his birth. He submitted to baptism—yet above him were the open heavens declaring, 'This is my beloved son.' He craved water from a woman—yet gave the priceless fountain within the soul. He slept in the boat like a tired man—yet commanded the waves as their Master. He wept at the grave of Lazarus—yet sent his voice into the spirit world to call him back. They came to take a prisoner—he stretched out willing hands. He stands a prisoner at the bar—yet he condemns the judge" (Dr. Griffin W. Bull).

And the governor asked him, saying, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Can't you see Pilate, with something of contempt and something of pity in his looks, as he put the question to the Prisoner before him—the Man wearied, deserted, bound—and thought him a pathetic picture of royalty? That Jesus claimed to be the King of the Jews was the accusation made by the Sanhedrin because they wished a political charge, one hostile to Roman supremacy, in order to influence Pilate. "Thou sayest," was Jesus's reply. "One is hardly prepared for such a reply to an equivocal question, and there is a temptation to seek escape by taking the words interrogatively—Dost thou say so? or evasively—*You* say, I make no statement. Explanations such as are given in John 18.3-37 were certainly necessary" (Expositor's Greek Testament).

II. PILATE'S APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE, verses 15-18. Now at the Passover Feast, doubtless in recognition of the celebration as a passing over, it had become customary for the governor to release a prisoner whom the people should choose. There was a prisoner who was notable, a man of popular interest, who had incited an insurrection, and Pilate proposed to the people to choose either this Barabbas or "Jesus who is called Christ," expecting in any event to please them, and hoping that they would choose Jesus. For Pilate was conversant with the ways of the Jews, he shrewdly suspected that the Accused had been popular with the people and had thus so aroused the envy of the Jewish authorities that they had made the charge against him. Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, and yet he did not free him. Pilate entered into negotiations with the people.

Fathers and mothers, teachers and all in places of authority, often find themselves obliged to decide what is right and what is not. Some of them follow in the footsteps of Pilate.

III. THE MESSAGE FROM PILATE'S WIFE, verse 19. Pilate's wife sent this message to him as he sat on the judgment-seat: "Have thou nothing to do with proceedings against that righteous man, for I have had a most disturbing dream this morning because of him." One commentator thinks this incident quite credible because she had a husband that much needed good advice, and would often get it from a good woman; and it was a womanly act!

"Pilate was warned. And I, too, have mysterious warnings when I am treading perilous ways. Sometimes the warning comes from a friend. Sometimes 'the angel of the Lord stands in the way for an adversary.' My conscience rings loudly like an alarm-bell in the dead of night. Yes, the warnings are clear and pertinent, but—! My soul, attend thou to the mystic warnings and 'play the man'!" (Dr. Jowett).

IV. THE RESULT OF THE APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE, verses 20-23. Meanwhile the chief priests and the elders labored with the people and persuaded them to ask for the release of Barabbas and the death of Jesus, so that when Pilate put the question to them for decision they shouted, "Barabbas." "What then shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ?" he questioned. His conscience had long since told him what he should do with Jesus: why need he ask the people? And the very people who five short days before had acclaimed Jesus King now answered, "Let him be crucified." Dismayed, Pilate exclaimed, "Why, what evil hath he done?" but they only cried out the louder, "Let him be crucified." "Kill him!" yelled Annas and Caiaphas, and with them the Pharisaical vipers hissed, the sellers of the holy animals, the money-changers, the men who rented beasts of burden, the porters of the caravans, shrieked. 'Kill him!' howled the scribes, wrapped in their theological cloaks, the vendors of the Passover fair, the tavern-keepers of the upper city, the Levites, the servants of the temple, the hired helpers of the usurers, the errand boys of the priests, all the servile horde assembled before the Procurator's house" (Papini).

V. PILATE DISCLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY, verses 24, 25. Pilate could gain nothing from the people, and to quell the tumult he yielded to their wish. But first he washed his hands before the multitude, saying "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it." "He did not want to condemn an innocent man, but he did not want the government to be troubled with a possible riot and did not want his own name implicated at Rome. He pacified the populace by assenting to the crime, and appeased his conscience by disowning it. How readily we think that if we protest against a thing formally we absolve ourselves! Pilate did not want to have his name associated with a riot at Jerusalem; and his name has been associated forever with this judicial murder. Little did the proud Roman think that his name would go down to all the years, to all the world, in infamy" (Dr. Hugh Black). "It is a striking illustration of the irony of history that Pilate was overtaken by the very fate to escape which he abandoned Jesus. Soon after the crucifixion his subjects lodged a complaint against him at Rome. He was recalled from his province and never returned. Ultimately, it is said, he terminated his existence by his own hand, 'wearied out with miseries'" (Dr. James Stalker).

Pilate could not abnegate his responsibility and cast it upon others. Public men frequently think they can do so; they say that they bow to the force of public opinion but wash their hands of the deed. But if their position, like Pilate's, demands that they should decide for themselves and take the consequences, the guilt of sinful action clings to them and cannot be transferred. This whole scene is a mirror for magistrates, to show them down what dark paths they may be pushed if they resign themselves to be the mere tools of the popular will" (Dr. James Stalker).

"His blood be on us and on our children," cried the people.

"How differently things look at different times! In the heat of passion consequences look small and of little account, but when the blood has time to cool the whole matter takes on another aspect. Looking forward in eager desire to a coveted object, nothing can be allowed to stand in the way, nothing is worth considering compared with the thing wanted; but looking back on the attainment, we cannot imagine that we offered such a price for

it. There is a daring of sin which is not afraid to assume all the responsibility if there is to be any, which is willing to accept any consequences. 'His blood be on us and on our children!' Is it only a leaf from ancient history, this, or has it a living moral for living men and women today? Does not the drunkard know all that you can tell him, better than you can tell him, what he is paying for his sin, what he is losing, what he must suffer and cause others to suffer? He knows it and in a way he counts the cost, but when the fierce temptation strikes him he will say that he will take the consequences. When the mad jealousy finds its seat in Cain's mind, when the smell of the pottage rises to Esau's nostrils, when the lust kindles in David's eye, when the jingle of the silver sounds in Judas's ear, when hatred grows in the priest's heart and rage grips the mob before Pilate's seat, passion in each case sweeps away the defences and the consequences are nothing. Any price so it be afterwards! Spurn the subtle temptation which suggests that sin has no consequences. Distrust the spurious courage which shuts the eyes to risks. Refuse to listen to the folly that a man can sow the wind and yet somehow avoid the necessity of reaping the whirlwind" (Dr. Hugh Black).

VI. JESUS SCOURGED, verse 26. Pilate released Barabbas to please the people. "We do not know what happened to Barabbas. Scripture, which tells us of so full a future for the penitent thief, records no more of this man. But of this we may be sure, that if Barabbas remained unchanged, it was because that morning when he dropped from the jailors' hands into the crowd he heard nothing but Pilate's voice commanding to set him free; and felt only the selfish gladness that once more he had escaped. But if he changed, if he led a new life, and as an old legend has it, became a servant of God, it was because he understood the meaning of that silence in which Christ assented to his own death and so let him go free" (Dr. George Adam Smith).

To further please the people, Pilate had Jesus scourged and delivered to be crucified. It has been suggested of late that scourging, though a terrible ordeal, was really inflicted in mercy upon one about to be crucified, in order so to exhaust his physical strength that he could not so long endure the more terrible tortures of the cross.

"What the Church calls the Passion of Jesus is in fact ended when he departs from the judgment hall of Pilate. From this point onward to the cross his step has the firmness and tranquillity of one who, in the presence of outward turbulence and hostility, has inward assurance and peace" (Dr. F. G. Peabody).

Annas and Caiaphas Tissot, Copyright, 1896–7

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What had been the spirit of the multitude as Jesus entered Jerusalem on the Sunday preceding this Thursday night? Why is their spirit so different now?

The Jewish Trials of Jesus. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus was betrayed by Judas, seized and bound by the Jews and hurried away to Annas, the ex-high priest, "the virtual head of ecclesiastical affairs, though Caiaphas was the nominal head." At the informal trial before Annas no witnesses were called, but an attempt was made to ensnare Jesus in his words. Annas inquired about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus demanded that charges be brought by witnesses. He had taught openly, he said, and those who had heard him could answer Annas. Whereupon a

brutal officer struck Jesus, saying "Answerest thou the hight priest so?" "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil," calmly returned Jesus; "but if well, why smitest thou me?" Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin.

There two false witnesses were found who testified, "This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." To the accusation Jesus made no reply, but when Caiaphas said, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God," Jesus answered: "Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." His words meant, "I am. But the time is coming when you and I shall change places; I will be the Judge, and you the prisoner at the bar." "He hath spoken blasphemy," cried Caiaphas, and the rest cried, "He is worthy of death." Then they spat in his face and struck him.

As Jesus was led away from the examination before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, his ear was greeted by Peter's denials. He turned and looked on Peter, and Peter wept.

Either another meeting of the Sanhedrin was held at sunrise and probably in the regular council chamber or there was at sunrise a continuation of the night meeting which could formally be regarded as a second meeting and thus meet the requirements of the law, which held that there must be at least two sittings in a grave criminal case, and that a death sentence must be pronounced in the daytime. At this meeting the night vote was formally confirmed, and the charge against Jesus formulated. They could not say that he was guilty of blasphemy, for what cared a Roman, a worshiper of Jupiter, about such a charge? They must trump up a political charge, so they said that Jesus claimed to be the King of the Jews.

The Roman Trials. See the Second Topic.

For the Blackboard. *Friday, April 7.* Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane about midnight. Betrayal and Arrest. Three Trials before the Jewish Authorities: (1) before Annas, (2) before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin; Denial of Peter, (3) Formal Condemnation by the Sanhedrin at Daybreak. Suicide of Judas. Three Trials before the Civil Authorities: (1) before Pilate; (2) before Herod; (3) before Pilate. People Offered their Choice of Barabbas or Christ, and Barabbas Chosen. Jesus Delivered to the Soldiers to be Mocked and Scourged. Pilate's Final Attempt to have Jesus Released. Jesus Taken to Golgotha and Crucified at Nine in the Morning. Death at Three in the Afternoon. Burial in the Tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

You are familiar with the picture of the "Ecce Homo Arch" in Jerusalem, the arch which bears the words of Pilate, "Behold the Man!" It is part of an ancient Roman triumphal arch (the room above being modern) which spans a narrow street. Once there were side arches and the street was wide. The building on the right belongs to the "Sisters of Zion" and stands on the site of the Prætorian, or Hall of Judgment, where Jesus was tried before Pontius Pilate. Half a century ago when the rubbish on this site was cleared away for the present buildings, one of the smaller side arches was disclosed and may now be seen within. In excavating beneath this, several feet below the street surface, large thick stone slabs that formed the Roman pavement were found. They are in line with the large central arch and are grooved, roughened by the feet of animals, while those underneath the smaller arch are smooth for the use of pedestrians. Archæologists agree that this was the very Roman pavement on which Christ stood. The large stone bench found here, about four feet high, may have been the *bema,* the judgment-seat, from which Pilate ordered Christ crucified.

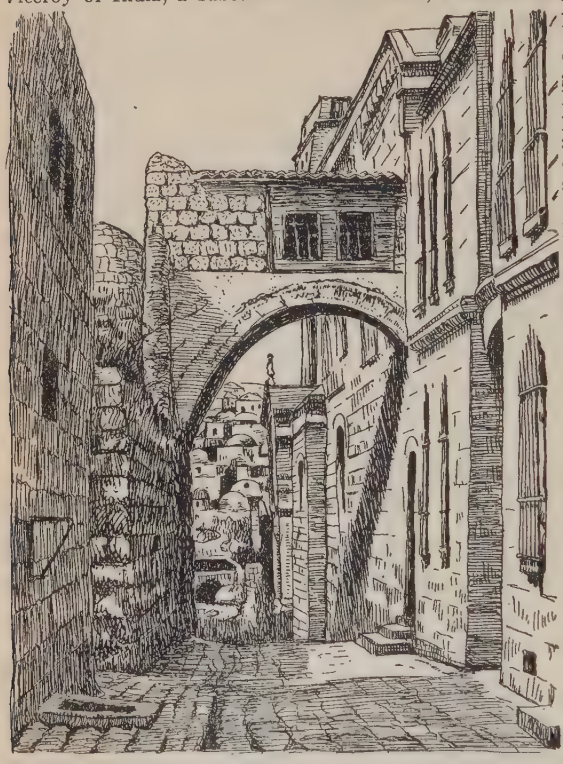
As we stood on this ancient Roman pavement very realistic was that scene nineteen hundred years ago. We were out in the open upon a public square facing Herod's beautiful palace. It was very early in the morning. We were in the midst of the chief priests and elders and a great crowd of Jews. Jesus was there, his hands bound, his face the only calm one in all that excited crowd.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
CHRIST BEFORE PILATE

Beginning the Lesson. Since A. D. 26, Pontius Pilate had been Procurator in the name of Tiberius Cæsar. Historians know nothing of him before his arrival

in Judea. He had been in Judea only a few years, but long enough to draw upon himself the bitterest hate of those over whom he ruled. It appears that he lost favor even with his masters, since in A. D. 36 the Governor of Syria, Lucius Vitellius, sent him to Rome to justify himself before Tiberius. The Emperor died before Pilate arrived in the metropolis, but according to tradition Pilate was exiled by Caligula, exiled into Gaul, where he killed himself.

To have an idea of Pilate's personality, make a mental picture of an English Viceroy of India, a subscriber to the *Times*, a reader of John Stuart Mill and Shaw —with Byron and Swinburne on his bookshelves— destined to administer the government over a captious, hungry and turbulent people, wrangling among themselves over a confusion of castes and mythologies and superstitions for which their ruler feels in his heart the profoundest aversion, looking down on them from the height of his dignity as a white man, a European, a Briton and a Liberal.



Ecce Homo Arch, Jerusalem

The only faith which Pilate needed to pretend to hold because of his office, was the new Roman religion, civic and political, concentrated on the cult of the Emperor. The first conflict with the Jews arose from this religion. When he had changed the guard of Jerusalem, he ordered the soldiers to enter the city by night, without taking off from their ensigns the silver images of Cæsar. In the morning, as soon as the Jews were aware of this, great was the horror and the uproar. It was the first time that the Romans had lacked in external respect for the religion of their subjects in Palestine. These figures of the deified Cæsar planted near the temple were for them an idolatrous provocation. A deputation was sent to Cæsarea to have Pilate take them away. Pilate refused; for five days and nights they stormed about him. Finally the Procurator, to get himself out of the trouble, convoked them in the amphitheater and treacherously had them surrounded with soldiers with naked swords, assuring them that no one would escape if they did not make an end of their clamor. But the Jews, instead of asking for mercy, offered their throats to the swords, and Pilate, conquered by this heroic stubbornness, ordered the insignia carried back to Cæsarea.

A little while after this, Pilate introduced into Herod's palace, where he lived when he stayed in Jerusalem, votive tablets dedicated to the Emperor. But the priests heard of it and once more the people were aroused to outraged and furious anger. He was asked to take away the idolatrous objects at once. An appeal to Cæsar was threatened, an appeal supported by evidence of the impositions and cruelties committed by Pilate. Pilate this time also did not yield. The Jews then made the appeal to Tiberius who decreed that the tablets should be sent back to Cæsarea.

Twice Pilate had had the worst of a dispute. But the third time he was triumphant. Coming from the city of public baths and aqueducts, a friend, as is well

known, of ablutions, he noticed that Jerusalem lacked water and he planned to have a fine large reservoir constructed and an aqueduct several miles long. But the undertaking was expensive and to pay for it he used a goodly sum taken from the treasury of the temple. The treasury was rich, for all the Jews scattered about in the Empire came there to bring offerings, and, when they could not come in person, sent them from a distance—but the priests cried out on the sacrilege, and the people incited by them made such a commotion that when Pilate came to Jerusalem, thousands of men gathered in a tumultuous crowd in front of his palace. But this time he sent among the multitude a large number of disguised soldiers who at a given signal began to lay about them so vigorously, among the most furious of the crowd, that in a short time they all fled away, and Pilate could enjoy in peace the water of the reservoir paid for with the Jews' money, and make use of it for his various ablutions.

Only a short time had passed since this last encounter, and now these very priests who three times had risen against his authority, the very ones who had tried to obtain his deposition, the very ones who hated him heartily, hated him as a Roman, as a symbol of the foreign dominion and of their slavery, and hated him still more personally as Pontius Pilate, as plotter against their religion and thief of their money—these very High Priests were forced to have recourse to him in order to vent another hatred, which for the moment was more bitter in their wicked hearts. Only hard necessity drove them to it, because death sentences could not be carried out if they were not confirmed by Cæsar's representative.

That Friday, at dawn, Pontius Pilate, wrapped in his toga, still sleepy and yawning, was waiting for them in Herod's palace, very ill-disposed towards these tiresome trouble-makers, whose contentions had forced him to rise earlier than usual.—Condensed from Papini's "Life of Christ."

Continue with The Text Explained.

Are You Seeking to Evade the Question? For each of us this is the question of questions—What shall *I* do with Jesus who is called Christ? Shall I reject him and live precisely as if I had never heard his name? Or shall I accept him as the Lord from heaven in human nature, trust him as my Savior, and obey him as my King? I must do the one or the other; and yet how many are seeking, like Pilate, to evade the question! They try to escape the responsibility of dealing with it as a direct alternative of yes or no. But as one has well said, "Necessity is laid upon us." The adversaries of Christ press upon us to give our verdict against him. We are troubled and perplexed, for we have long heard about him, and have had each of us his own convictions. We would still remain neutral. We try—and try in vain—to escape from the spirit, the conversation, the literature, the question of the times. Again and again we wash our hands. But neither our silence nor our actions are of any avail; we must give our answer to the question.—W. M. Taylor in The World's Best Sermons.

The Triumphant Death. Recall in what spirit Christ himself approached the cross. You will remember two things: first, that Christ spoke of the cross very early in his ministry, and, second, that he always spoke of it as something predetermined. Did he not distinctly declare that he laid down his life, but that no man took it from him; and do we not find at every point of the unfolding tragedy the reiteration of that phrase so constantly associated with the incident of his infancy—"that it might be fulfilled"?

When once we grasp this truth, the sense of the merely tragic in Calvary is lost in the sense of the purely triumphant. We see the various actors in the drama—Caiaphas, Herod, Pilate—all falling into place, as at some mystic signal; each doing something that had to be done, each doing something dictated by the grossness of his nature, and thus something for which he is answerable: but also doing something that was an unconscious fulfilment of a program; and Jesus himself passing through all these scenes with the sublime steadfastness of one who knows that thus it must be. This is the joy of the cross. Jesus has not lost his way. He moves steadily to his goal. He is no victim of accident—at every step something was done which was long predicted, something that the will of God made necessary and inevitable.—Dr. W. J. Dawson, in The Reproach of Christ.

For Discussion. 1. Pontius Pilate: a character study. Pilate's spirit was that of strenuous worldliness which makes self its aim and subordinates everything to success.—Dr. James Stalker.

2. No man who has known Christ may escape a decision regarding him.—Dr. George Adam Smith.

3. Justice and the popular vote. "The earliest threat of judicial recall which is recorded in history worked the world's worst enormity in judicial injustice."

Questions for Pupils to Think About. 1. What would a physician say was the cause of Christ's death? 2. A jurist? 3. A sociologist? 4. A moralist? 5. A Christian? 6. Why did Jesus accept death on the cross?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE TRIAL OF JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane and the events that followed.

The Roman Law Court. The scene is in the open air, the courtyard of Pilate's palace. There is the governor on the judgment seat, alert and soldier-like, with the imperious attitude of a ruling race. He dislikes and fears those troublesome Jews who have got him into difficulties more than once. He has a Roman's scorn for their provincial religious bigotries, but he has stern orders from Rome not to irritate them unnecessarily.

The Roman law had no place for a public prosecutor. Charges must be brought by citizens before the law can act. The Sanhedrin representatives are before him as prosecutors and the judge opens proceedings with the usual set question: "What accusation bring ye against this man?"

One does not understand the rather impertinent reply, "If he were not a malefactor we would not have brought him here." Perhaps not having a good cause they were fighting for time. Pilate promptly rebuked them. "If ye have no serious indictment to lay before this court, if it be some matter of your national customs, take him and judge him yourselves."

"It is not permitted to us," they replied, "to put any man to death." This indicated at once that they were arraigning him on a capital charge. Whereupon Pilate insisted upon a definite indictment. This is the way Luke gives it: "We have found that this man is (1) perverting the nation, (2) forbidding tribute to Cæsar, (3) saying that he himself is Messiah—a king."

The first charge was ambiguous; they probably hoped it would pass unnoticed. The second was clearly untrue. Jesus had said almost the opposite. The third was a dangerous charge under the Julian law of treason and Pilate was bound to take it seriously. According to the custom of the court he called on the accused to plead. "Guilty or not guilty? Art thou the King of the Jews?"

"Thou sayest," was the brief answer. "Thine own nation and the chief of the priests have brought thee before me. What hast thou done? Art thou a king?"

"Yes, I am a King, the King of all truth-seekers. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

"Truth!" scoffed the contemptuous Roman, "who shall say what is truth?" But he evidently came to the conclusion that this Messiah did not really design any overt action against Rome.

Then he seems to have conferred with the prosecutors. "I find no fault in him," that is, no real ground for this charge of treason. If this were a verdict of acquittal, it should have ended the trial. What Pilate probably meant was that though Jesus did claim to be Messiah and did not disclaim being a king, and though his followers and fellow-countrymen interpreted this as rebellion against the Roman power, yet he, Pilate, believed they were mistaken and that Jesus had no intention of rebelling against the Empire. Technically he could be brought in guilty, but he really was innocent of treason. Therefore Pilate wished the prosecutors not to press the charge.

They insisted on pressing it. They felt that they could force Pilate's hand by playing on his dread of the emperor. "Whoso maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." Pilate knew that there was nothing which the Roman Government more dreaded than an assumption of Messiahship in Palestine. It had cost them dearly already.

Now came a dramatic incident in the trial, the page boy brought a note from the Governor's wife: "Have thou nothing to do with this just man, for I have suffered many things this night in a dream because of him." Dreams and omens would startle the bravest of Romans. Julius Cæsar was murdered because he neglected Calpurnia's dream. That letter did not make Pilate happier.

And still the clamor went on around him. "He stirreth up the people, beginning in Galilee." In his perplexity he caught at the word Galilee: "Is the man a

Galilean? Of Herod's jurisdiction? Could I throw my responsibility on Herod who is in Jerusalem just now?"

So he sent him to Herod. Perhaps the Galilean ruler will be interested in the Galilean prophet and express an opinion. But that wily old Jew was too clever to be caught. He was not going to mix himself up with a treason trial. And the Prisoner's lofty attitude vexed him. Jesus would not open his lips to the Baptist's murderer. So Herod and his officers set him at naught and put an old purple robe on him in mockery of his kingship and sent him back. There is no escape for Pilate that way.

In the interval of waiting the position has grown worse. The priests have been exciting the people. In a weak moment Pilate appealed to the people. "Ye have a custom that I should release to you one prisoner at the Passover. Will you have Jesus of Nazareth?" "No!" cried the mob with a fierce, angry shout. "Not this man, but Barabbas! Barabbas! Barabbas! Barabbas!"

"What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

The mob knew very well what they wanted done with him. "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Pilate ordered Jesus scourged.

Soon the exhausted Prisoner was strapped to the scourging post and his blood flowed and his nerves quivered under the brutal lash of the executioner. They crushed a wreath of thorns upon his brow. They flung Herod's purple cloak again over his bleeding shoulders. They put a reed in his right hand and mocked him, crying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

Then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe and Pilate said unto them, Behold the Man!

"Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Pilate stood watching him, wondering and perplexed. And his superstitious fears came back again as a clear accusing voice rang out across the court: "He ought to die because he made himself the Son of God!"

The Son of God! "Then was Pilate the more afraid and entered again into the palace and asked him, 'Whence art thou?' But Jesus gave him no answer." It was too late for answers now.

And this seems to make him the more afraid still. "Speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify or release thee?"

As a superior condescending to an inferior, as a judge trying to make some little allowance for a culprit, Jesus speaks:

"Thou couldest have no power against me except it were given thee from above. Bad as thou art they that delivered me to thee have greater sin than thine."

What shall Pilate do with this Jesus who is called Christ? He wants to stand by him. His conscience tells him he ought. But before his mind's eye is that fierce old Tiberius, cruel, irritable, suspicious. He is conscious of the implied threat in that challenge of the Jews: "If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend." What shall he do? At any rate he will try to save his face and throw back the responsibility where it belongs. "When he saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man. See ye to it.' And all the people answered and said, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' "

The poor coward with the eyes of Jesus resting on him in this great crisis of his decision gave up the struggle. "Then he delivered him unto them to be crucified."

That is what Pilate did with Jesus who was called Christ. And for that dastard act he has stood in the pillory for two thousand years wherever the Christian creed is said, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate."—Condensed from A People's Life of Christ, by J. Paterson-Smyth.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. We are morally responsible for every wrong which we have the power to prevent.—Dr. J. D. Jones.

He who goes about mourning and saying, "It is too bad, but I can do nothing to remedy it"—he is a Pilate.—Henry Ward Beecher.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Did Jesus claim to be a king? 2. What was the nature of his kingship? 3. What does the word "ghost" in the last sentence of our lesson mean? 4. How many "sayings" of Jesus on the cross are recorded, and what are they? (Read the accounts in all four Gospels.) 5. What did Jesus say his death would accomplish, as recorded in Jn. 12.32, 33?

THE SAVIOR ON THE CROSS

GOLDEN TEXT: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Romans 8.32

LESSON Luke 23.33-46 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 22.11-19

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 27.32-61; Mark 15.21-47; Luke 23.26-32, 47-56; John 19.17-42

LUKE 23.33 And when they came unto the place which is called the skull, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left. 34 And Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And parting his garments among them, they cast lots. 35 And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also scoffed at him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen. 36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, offering him vinegar, 37 and saying, If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself. 38 And there was also a superscription over him, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 And one of the malefactors that were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us. 40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom. 43 And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

44 And it was now about the sixth hour, and a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 the sun's light failing: and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. 46 And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this, he gave up the ghost.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE CRUCIFIXION, verses 33, 34. In our Old Testament studies we have seen how Assyrian kings boasted of impaling men on stakes and of skinning them alive. It is believed that the Assyrians were responsible for the introduction of crucifixion into the Mediterranean world. The Romans did not adopt it until after the time of Julius Cæsar, and then in Italy only as punishment for crimes against the State or in the case of slaves, but they did not hesitate to use it in the case of the despised Jews.

"There was a sentence in the law which invoked a special and irrevocable curse of God upon him who 'hung upon a tree.' If Jesus should be crucified, he will come under the curse, and then, said the cunning Pharisees, we shall see what will become of his Messianic Sonship. At the door of hell, said the Jewish teacher, sits Abraham to see that no son of his shall pass within. But there is no forgiveness in the hereafter, as there is no mercy here, for him who has come under the curse of the law. He must go to his place, and Abraham will not know him as he enters there, for the curse of the law is upon him."

"In ancient times there were no executioners, properly speaking. Oriental sovereigns, who were every day commanding decapitations, constantly kept executioners near them among their guards, and soldiers were the agents through whom the Romans put their condemned to death. Those of Jerusalem pertained to the auxiliary troops, always very ill made up, and it was to this brutal soldiery, habituated to cruelty and indifference to suffering from constantly witnessing it, that Jesus was given up."

We call the knoll where Jesus was crucified *Calvary,* from the Latin word *Calvaris,* a skull. Jesus was crucified between two thieves. "Crucifixion was terrible and disgraceful enough in itself, but if Jesus had hung upon his cross with nothing near him to disturb the impression of his calm serenity and innocence, it might well have happened that the people who stood and watched would have lost sight of the disgrace and would have felt the majesty of the sacrifice. Already that place of suffering might have seemed as glorious as it has seemed to the world since. But as it was, they went to the prison and dragged out two wretched culprits who were waiting for their doom. That there might be no doubt about the disgracefulness of the Savior's sufferings, they hung him between two thieves" (Phillips Brooks).

The four soldiers who had crucified Jesus, after dividing his garments among them (the headdress, the shoes, the outer garment, and the girdle were distributed "to every soldier a part," Jn. 19.23, 24), cast lots for the possession of the seamless inner

garment. And then they sat and watched him there (Mt. 27.36), to make sure that he was not rescued.

He who can think of the crucifixion of Christ, knowing that he suffered for the sins of the world, and can yet be unmoved or indifferent to him, is not wholly different from the soldiers who parted his garments among them and then sat down to watch him with cruel indifference.

And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke is the only one of the Evangelists who records this saying from the cross. Christ was speaking, not only of the soldiers who had but done as they were ordered, but of the Jews who had brought about his crucifixion and who did not realize the enormity of their guilt. "Love your enemies," "Do good to them that despitefully use you," Jesus had often said in his public discourses, and now this prayer exemplifies the spirit he would have his followers possess. "It was strange that one almost swooning with pain should have said the gentlest-hearted and truest thing about human nature that has ever been said since the world began" (Gerald Stanley Lee).

"And how is it with me? Are my foes able to maim my spirit as well as my body? Do they win their end by making me a smaller man? Or am I magnanimous even on the cross?" (Dr. Jowett).

"Think of the generous heart of the dying Jesus who could actually try to find an excuse—not merely forgive—not merely pray for—but actually try to find something to say in their favor. There was very little that could be said, but he looked for it and said it. Their prejudices, their upbringing, their ignorance about him. They did not know what they were doing. If they realized it they would not do it. Father, forgive! We must all stand before the judgment seat of God. But it is something to remember of him who made allowance even for these, 'We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge'" (J. Paterson-Smyth).

II. THE TAUNTS OF THE SPECTATORS, verses 35-37. And the people stood beholding. And they that passed by—the cross was near the public road—railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God come down from the cross," Matthew 27.39, 40. These taunts seem to refer to words spoken at the trial of Jesus. And the rulers did not scorn to join the rabble in their mockery: "He saved others," they said; "let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen." Note their admission that he saved others! The priests told the truth by accident. "They intended scorn, they gave praise. As the crown of thorns became the Master's throne, so their mocking contempt became a Hallelujah. It is the glory of Christ that he could not save himself if he would save others" (Dr. Abbott). And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, offering him vinegar, and saying, "If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself," thus echoing the taunt of the Jewish rulers.

"Let me listen, not as judge, but as one who has been in the company of the callous crowd. For I, too, have mocked him! I have said, 'Hail, King!' and I have bowed before him, but it has been mock and empty homage! I have sung, 'Crown him Lord of all!' but there has been no real recognition of his sovereignty; mine has been a mock coronation. From the seat of the mocker, deliver me, Lord!" (Dr. Jowett).

III. THE SUPERSCRIPTION OVER THE CROSS, verse 38. And there was also a superscription over him: "This is the King of the Jews." It was customary to affix to the cross an inscription telling the crime the one crucified had committed. Pilate could ascribe no crime to Jesus, therefore he had this inscription written so as to annoy the priests who, as he expected, considered it an insult to themselves: see Jn. 19.21, 22. The inscription was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek (Jn. 19.20) that all who passed by might read it, for these were the languages spoken throughout the then civilized world.

IV. THE CONVERSATION WITH THE MALEFACTORS, verses 39-43. "Art not thou the Christ?" sneered one of the wretched men who were crucified with Jesus. "Save thyself and us," he cried. But the other man rebuked him. "You and he both must soon be judged by God. He is innocent and has nothing to fear; you and I are guilty, and fear should keep you from adding to your sins!" Then turning to Jesus, the malefactor besought Jesus to remember him upon coming into his Kingdom. Jesus granted more than was asked. "Verily I say unto you," Jesus solemnly promised, "today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." This is the one

"death-bed repentance" recorded in the Bible. *"One* was saved on the cross that none might despair, and only one, that none might presume."

"There was no self-centeredness in our Savior's grief. He was the Good Physician even when his body was mangled on the cross. And when there was darkness over all the earth he let the light of the morning into the heart of the desolate thief. And, good Lord, graciously help me to do likewise!" (Dr. Jowett).

V. THE DEATH OF THE SAVIOR, verses 44-46. For three hours there was darkness and the veil of the temple—the curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies—was torn in two. "The darkened skies were a fit symbol of the blackest crime in all the history of man. The rending of the temple veil was a type of the 'new and living way' opened into the presence of God for all believers. Thus these two signs correspond to the human and the divine aspects of this atoning death, and indicate the heinousness of sin and the purpose of redeeming grace" (Dr. Charles R. Erdman).

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." This is another saying from the cross which only Luke records. The Greek word here translanted *commend* is in other passages (for example, in Tim. 1.12) translated *commit:* the two words were synonymous in older English. Except the word *Father,* the saying is a quotation from Ps. 31.5: it is repeated to this day by many Jewish children as part of their evening prayer. "In the humble home at Nazareth one might have heard Mary teaching the child Jesus to repeat the words as evening by evening he lay down in the happy rest of childhood. And now, in the last twilight, closing life's heavy-laden day, it is with the prayer of his childhood still upon his lips that he betakes himself to the last repose."

"Such was the faith in which the Lord Jesus met and conquered Death; and only he can make us partakers of that faith. Science and philosophy, all the best teachers of our race, apart from Christ, are vague and cheerless as to that last voyage, in which, once we quit the shore, no star will guide us back. The religion of Christ is the only religion to live in and to die in. By his own calm faith in the very article of death Christ bids us trust our Father in death and for what comes after death as much as for the morrow. If you trust, you trust. You cannot draw a line on this side of which you will trust but beyond which you will not. You cannot trust, really trust, a man for five dollars and be unable to trust him for ten. You cannot thus both trust and distrust your fellow-man. Nor can you trust God for the morrow and not trust him for the day after, for a hundred or a thousand years hence, for all eternity. 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' By that word Jesus Christ says to us: 'If you have known the Father, if you have trusted him in life, you cannot but trust him in death. You cannot drift beyond his love and care. You cannot take too hopeful a view of what is to come after this mortal life. Joyfully commit all to the Father. In his house there are many mansions, and there, as here, he will give the most and the best you are capable of receiving" (Dr. Robert Law).

And Jesus Christ gave up the ghost.

On a crucifix in an eastern monastery are inscribed these words: *Tot pro te: quot pro me?*—Thus much on thy account: how much on mine?

"The Way of Sorrows thou for me hast trod,
My feet are loath to follow thee, O God!
Thy sacred hands were pierced for love of me,
My hands, O Jesus, labor not for thee.
The cruel Cross thou, Lord, for me didst bear.
Would I—a craven—fail thy load to share?
The thief who cried to thee thou didst not spurn,
With penitence and love to thee I turn;
Unstable, weak, yet would I follow thee,
Lord Jesus, guide and strengthen even me!" (H. A. Sprague).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What had the multitude cried on the day of the Triumphal Entry? What had happened between that day and the crucifixion?

Final Scenes. Although all the disciples, without exception, forsook Jesus at the moment of his arrest, two of them, Peter and John, recovered from their fright sufficiently to follow him to the palace of the high priest. There Peter thrice denied his Lord. I like to believe that John stayed by Jesus to the last, and that he was present at the trials. At the crucifixion John took his stand at the foot of the cross, and received his dying Savior's last legacy, when Christ entrusted Mary his mother to his care.

The time of the crucifixion was from nine in the morning till three in the afternoon of Friday, April 7, A. D. 30. The traditional site was beneath the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Outside the city wall on the north, not far from St. Stephen's Gate, is a knoll called "Gordon's Calvary," which most modern scholars believe to have been where the crucifixion took place. Two great roads from Joppa and Damascus crossed near by, and multitudes of pilgrims and travelers could stop to see the spectacle.

For the Blackboard. See the chronology for Friday given in the last lesson.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

An assistant of Dr. Robert W. Dale of Birmingham, England, was preparing a sermon upon the Atonement. He was not satisfied with his explanation of how the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross saves from sin, and besought Dr. Dale's help. All teachers may wisely follow the counsel which Dr. Dale gave him. "Give up troubling, my friend," he said, "about how it was possible for God to forgive sins and tell them straight that Christ died for their sins. It is the fact that people want to know, and not your theory, nor mine, as to how it was or is possible."

Via Dolorosa The Sorrowful Way to Calvary

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

CHRIST DYING FOR OUR SINS

Beginning the Lesson. They have laid him unresisting upon that rough black cross. Through his hands and feet they drive the cruel spikes. Now by combined effort the cross is lifted up and dropped into its socket, tearing through nerve and muscle in the merciless shock. And the Son of God in his awful pain is looking forth —on the fair city that has cast him out to die, and the soldiers at his feet throwing dice for his clothes, and the priests brutally exulting in their victory, and the holiday crowd out to see the spectacle. The world in miniature is there before him—the world for which he is dying.

"And the world knew him not." One day it shall know. And the meaning of it all. And down through the centuries that horrible black cross, emblem of shame and

ignominy unspeakable, shall be the sign of the noblest thought that has ever touched humanity, the emblem of the self-sacrifice of God.—J. Paterson-Smyth, in A People's Life of Christ.

The Changed Attitude toward the Cross.

In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

Thus we sing today. But how differently was the cross regarded at the time of Christ's crucifixion! Then, like the gallows with us, it was associated only with degradation; to die on the cross was to suffer the most ignominious death possible. Rome had borrowed the cross from the East, but she would not use it for her meanest citizen. When Christ died upon it, instead of the cross eclipsing his name, his name transfigured the cross. His disciples went forth and preached Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God; and the cross of shame became at once the cross of glory.

The Gospel of the Cross. A father's heart is rent by the sin and disobedience of his son. The first burst of resentment over, the father-love would forgive the boy freely. But forgiveness without change of mind and heart on the son's part achieves nothing but the mastery of the father's spirit; its probable issue is indifference and contempt and continued sin. And so he must show his son his sin; in some way the boy must see it as it is. Moreover, he must bear with his son the effect of his sin; whatever the boy has to suffer, he, too, for the love he bears him, must suffer with him. Above all, he must save his son from his sin, so that it shall never stain his life again.

And how does the cross save? In the home it is easy to trace. Touched by his father's sorrow, seeing in its true light his sin, what it costs, where it leads, won by the love that shares with him its penalty, the boy comes to himself, turns from his sin, henceforth rejoices to take his father's way, not his own. Just this is to be saved. When, won by the love of the Father who sent, or the love of the Savior who came, a man sees his sin as it is, where it leads, what it costs, comes to himself, dethrones self, enthrones the love and the will of God, he is saved.—Dr. Alexander McColl, in A Working Theology.

Why Did Christ Die? Many answers have been given to this question, all of them true, but none of them adequate, except the one great answer of the Scripture and of Christian experience.

1. Ask the physician, and he will reply that the overstrain of the vital organs brought about his death, that any man would have died under the same circumstances. And that is true. The unexpected death of Jesus has excellent physical explanation, when it is remembered how severe had been his strain for hours past and how violently he had been handled by his enemies and the soldiers.

2. Ask the jurist, and he will reply that Jesus was the victim of illegal prejudice, the yielding of a ruler to popular clamor inspired by malice, that it was a judicial murder, and that any man caught in the same grip would pay the penalty with his life. And that is true.

3. Ask the sociologist, and he will reply that Jesus was the victim of a rigid and well-fortified social system which he had endangered and which revenged itself on him in this way, that any man may expect something of the same sort if he tries to overthrow entrenched privilege, that Jesus had tended to discredit the "classes" in the sight of the "masses," and that this was the price he paid. And that also is true.

4. Ask the moralist, and he will reply that Jesus was bearing witness to the truth, that he could at any time have saved himself if he had been willing to compromise with the truth, that he laid down his life rather than yield what he knew was true, and that any man who follows that course may expect to find himself cast out. And that is true.

5. Ask the Christian, ask Paul, ask Luther, ask Wesley, and he will reply that none of these explanations has touched bottom. "Christ died for our sins." The Son of Man came to "give his life a ransom for many." "The blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." It was a murder, yet it was a sacrifice. No other could have died his death, though multitudes have died in the joy of his death. The cross is the way of peace for

sinful men. No one has ever plumbed the depths of it, but everyone who has trusted it knows that somehow and somewhere new life and pardon and power come to the soul from it. It is not understanding the cross that saves sinners; it is acceptance of the Christ of the cross that saves. But it is the Christ of the cross who has proved himself powerful for salvation.—Dr. Cleland B. McAfee, in The Westminster Adult Bible Class.

A Savior Must Be a Sufferer. While the theology of the cross has been involved in many controversies, the religion of the cross is unmistakable and plain. It teaches the world the permanent relation between suffering and saving. A savior must as a rule be a sufferer. To helps others, one must have borne his own cross.

"The mark of rank in nature is capacity for pain,
And the anguish of the singer makes the beauty of the strain."

This may seem too severe a teaching for common life, yet it is verified almost every day. Sometimes one wants to help a friend who is in sore trouble, but somehow he cannot reach the heart of the need. There is a barrier which good intentions cannot cross. What is the matter with this ineffective kindliness? The matter is that the helper has not shared the experience which he wants to help. He is trying to reach by advice or sympathy or philosophy what can be touched by nothing else but experience of the same need. And so it happens that some other life, which has not half so much eloquence or learning, simply because it has borne the same trouble and merged into some degree of victory, is able to reach across the silence with its hand, and the life in trouble says: "This man has borne his own cross, and so he is able to help me to bear mine." Raise that capacity for suffering to its highest power and you approach the religion of the cross of Christ. Jesus might have done all the great deeds and said all the great words reported of him, and yet have remained a teacher and preacher instead of a Savior. What draws the world to him is not the height of his genuis, but the depth of his experience.

"Christ leads me through no darker rooms
Than he went through before."

His cross is the symbol, not only of humiliation, but also of salvation. The day of the cross is not merely the commemoration of a historic tragedy, but the illumination of life by the experience of tragedy. To learn to serve, one must learn to suffer. To learn the law of service, one must learn the lesson of the cross.—Dr. Francis G. Peabody, in Mornings in the College Chapel.

Enthroning the Crucified Savior. On Good Friday a lady presented me with an exquisitely sad but unspeakably beautiful picture—a picture of the Thorn-crowned Face. Where am I to hang it? It will insist, tenderly but firmly, on a suitable and harmonious environment. Henry Drummond used to tell of a Cambridge undergraduate whose sweetheart visited his room. She found its walls covered with pictures of actresses and racehorses. She said nothing, but on his birthday presented him with a picture like this. A year later she again called on him at Cambridge. The Thorn-crowned Face hung over the fireplace; and the other walls were adorned with charming landscapes and reproductions of famous paintings. He caught her glancing at her gift.

"It's made a great difference to the room," he said; "what's more, it's made a great difference *in me*."

That is the way our pictures have. They insist on ruling everything and everybody. I have no right to enthrone a despot in my home; nor to exalt a Thorn-crowned King unless I am prepared to make him Lord of all.—F. W. Borcham, in Rubble and Roseleaves.

The Divine Purpose. Christ believed that his life was included in the divine intention and purpose. In a confession written by a broken-hearted mother who lost her son in the great war, I find these remarkable words: :"There must be a God who cares, a God who wants our help in this great game. What I really need to believe is that my son did serve some magnificent purpose, that it did make a difference to God and his plan that my boy should so willingly have offered up his joyous young life to what he thought was right."

As I read these words I thought I was listening to the confession of Mary, the mother of our Lord, as she stood at the cross; and of all the Marys to whom the cross has brought something more than personal anguish, some vision of a divine purpose which transforms grief into a glory. For it does make a difference to God whether a human life dedicates itself to high duties or capitulates to base fears. It

makes a difference to the ultimate victory of God whether the humblest life obeys the dictates of the flesh or the captaincy of the spirit.

And if we would overcome base fear, something more is needed than a devotion to high ideals; it is the profound and reverent recognition of the truth that we and our conduct are of value not only to this or that passing cause which we may embrace, but to God himself and to God's ultimate redemption of mankind.—Dr. W. J. Dawson.

For Discussion. 1. There is but one result that can warrant the agony of Calvary, and that is our being conquerors over sin.—Rev. Mark Guy Pearse.

2. Deathbed repentances.

Questions for Pupils to Think About. 1. Why ought the disciples to have expected Jesus's resurrection? 2. Why did they not? 3. Who first drew the right inference from the facts learned at the tomb? 4. Why did Mary fail to recognize Jesus at first? 5. What are the proofs of the resurrection? 6. Has your belief in the Risen Lord affected your life? 7. Has your faith that because he lives you will live also, borne fruit in the kind of life you are now living?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. Let us stand on this little hill, called Calvary, on the day of crucifixion. There, hanging upon the cross, is the agonizing, fainting form of the Lord. Around him there is a noisy multitude. I want to hear their cries as well as see their faces.

The men whom the Lord had driven out of the temple with a whip of small cords are there, and they are crying "Ha! Ha!" in malicious satisfaction. The men whom he had denounced as a generation of vipers are there, wagging their heads in affected homage. The Scribes and Pharisees whom he had withered with the indictment of hypocrites are there, railing at him with the cry, "Hail, King of the Jews!" All over the little hill you can hear men laughing at the irony of his impotence—"Let him come down from the cross"—or they are hurling at him a sneer which accentuates his weakness—"He saved others, himself he cannot save." And there hangs the quiet form, thirsting and fainting in his agony. One of them immediately ran and took a sponge, and filling it with sour wine, put it on the end of a reed and offered it to him to drink, but the rest said, "Wait, and let us see if Elijah is coming to save him."—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Where was Jesus crucified? What was the superscription over him? What was his prayer for those who crucified him? Could many others have uttered that prayer at such a time? What did the soldiers do? What did the rulers say? Who were crucified with him? etc.

Jesus Christ the Savior. Jesus knew what heart suffering was—the denial, betrayal and desertion of his disciples brought intense suffering to him. He knew what mental suffering was—the struggle in Gethsemane proves that. And he knew what physical suffering was—he was scourged, the crown of thorns was driven upon his head, the nails into his hands and feet. He gave himself and his whole life to the world, and then he gave up his life for the world. He went *jusqu'au bout,* as the French phrase puts it, to the limit, he gave everything, he held nothing back. His enemies took his life, but he could have escaped had he so willed. A chaplain was speaking to a soldier on a cot in a hospital. "You have lost an arm in the great cause," said the chaplain. "No," said the soldier with a smile, "I didn't lose it—I gave it." And in the same way Jesus did not lose his life, he gave it.

His blood was shed for a purpose. Perhaps you have heard these words of a hymn: "He died to make us good, that we might be forgiven, and go at last to Heaven."

Jesus died to redeem us. In almost every church there are three letters displayed somewhere, usually upon the baptismal font, which will remind you of this at every service. They are I. H. S. Do you know for what they stand? Each one represents a Latin word, is the first letter of that Latin word. *I* is the first letter of the Latin word meaning *Jesus; H* is the first letter of the word meaning *of men; S* is the first letter of the word meaning *Savior.* The three together stand for "Jesus the Savior of Men."

The Savior Has a Right to Us. Frederick Arnot, the missionary explorer, was going through the tall African grass with his black lads when a lion sprang out toward the last boy in the line. Instantly Arnot threw himself between them, and

the lion, confused, fled. When the chief of the tribe heard of the incident, he said: "I'd go anywhere with a white man who throws his own body between a lion and a black lad of no account."

Don't you think we should be willing to go anywhere with the Savior who died on the cross to save us from a worse fate than that from which the missionary saved the no-account boy!

What does our Golden Text say? Who wrote these words?

"We are not our own, we are bought with a price," declares Dr. John R. Mott. "By his death on the cross Christ loosed us from our sins. And that death on the cross gave Christ proprietary rights to each Christian. Therefore it is unfair and dishonest not to give him absolute sway over us.

"One day Zinzendorff, walking along a village street, went into a little church, and while lingering there had his attention arrested by a painting that set forth the sufferings on the cross of our Savior, and as his eyes were fixed upon that scene of suffering love he noticed this couplet below:

All this I did for thee
What hast thou done for me?

He was melted. He rose a changed man. He went out to live that wonderful life, and inaugurated the movement which has planted in all parts of the world the Moravian Missions. Because of what Christ did he has a right to dominate every one of us."

"Calvary Clover." I am going to tell you of a strange little plant that I always associate with the death of our Lord Jesus. It is called "Calvary Clover." Each leaf divides into three small portions, and where the three portions meet there is a red mark just like a splash of blood. In the evening the flower folds, so that the two lower parts come together like hands in the attitude of prayer, and the upper portion bends over them like a head bowed in submission. Stranger still, the seed case that holds the seeds of this little plant has jagged points, and coils up into a circular shape, so that it seems like a model of the crown of thorns. You will not wonder that men have called the plant "Calvary Clover."

You must have growing in your heart that which is a little like this Calvary Clover. It will be a flower of love, for it will remember that Jesus shed his blood for boys and girls. It will be a flower of prayer that will speak to God every morning and every evening. It will be a flower of obedience and submission that will bow the head when commands are given. It will be a flower whose seeds are sown through deeds of self-sacrifice which are not easy at the time, and which may even be thorny; but, if the spirit of sacrifice is there, then the flowers of love and prayer and submission will grow to the honour of our dear Lord.—Condensed from Little Sermons to the Children, by R. C. Gillie.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Christ missed being King of the Jews in order that he might be King of Kings and Lord of Lords.—Dr. James Stalker.

"Jerusalem! Gethsemane!
How real do they seem to be,
These Lenten days—the judgment-hall,
The hill, the cross, the funeral pall.
Our hearts grow tender as we say:
'For us the Master trod this way.'"

"There is a green hill far away,
Outside a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified
Who died to save us all.
We may not know, we cannot tell,
What pains he had to bear,
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there."

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who was Joseph of Arimathea, and what did he do after the death of Christ? (Jn. 19.38-42). 2. Where was Jesus buried? 3. What do the Gospels say about the resurrection itself? 4. Who was Mary Magdalene? (Lk. 8.2; 23.49, 55; 24.1-10; Jn. 19.25). 5. How was she convinced that Christ was risen? 6. What may have kept John from entering the tomb at once? 7. What convinced him of Christ's resurrection?

OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION

GOLDEN TEXT: The Lord is risen indeed. Luke 24.34

LESSON John 20.1-18 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 16.5-11

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 28.1-15; Mark 16.1-11; Luke 24.1-12; John 20.19, 20

JOHN 20 Now on the first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb. 2 She runneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him. 3 Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. 4 And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; 5 and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in. 6 Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, 7 and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed. 9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. 10 So the disciples went away again unto their own home.

11 But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looketh into the tomb; 12 and she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. 14 When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. 16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say, Teacher.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE VISIT OF MARY MAGDALENE TO THE TOMB OF CHRIST, verses 1, 2. On Sunday, the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb of Jesus. Mary Magdalene was from the village of Magdala north of Tiberias: see Mk. 16.9. What Jesus had done for her is told in Lk. 8.2. She had been one of those near the cross (Jn. 19.23; Lk. 8.2). There were others with her, as the "we" in the next verse indicates, and they had come to embalm the body of Jesus (Mt. 28.1; Mk. 16.1; Lk. 24.1, 10).

A stone had been placed over the entrance of the tomb (Mk. 15.46) and sealed (Mt. 27.66). It was probably a cylindrical stone which could be rolled to either side in a groove at the base of the opening. The women found the stone removed and Mary hastened away to tell Peter and John (John always refers to himself in his Gospel as "the disciple whom Jesus loved"), while the others evidently remained at the tomb and the events took place which are recorded in Mt. 28.5-8, Mk. 16.5-8; and Lk. 24.4-10. On meeting the two disciples Mary cried out anxiously, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him."

II. PETER AND JOHN AT THE EMPTY TOMB, verses 3-10. Peter and John started for the tomb, but John outran Peter. Stooping down, for the entrance was low, and looking in, John saw only the linen grave cloths. He did not enter: perhaps he was lost in wonder and reflection; perhaps a feeling of reverence kept him from entering. Peter, however, impulsive as ever, entered at once and found the napkin that had enveloped the head of Jesus rolled up by itself, thus indicating that there had been no haste when Jesus left the tomb. Had his body been carried off by others, the grave cloths would naturally have been taken with it. Then John also entered and saw and it was enough for him: he believed that Jesus was risen: until he saw proof of the facts, he had not realized that Jesus must die and rise from the dead. See Jesus's words to the disciples in Mt. 16.21; Mk. 8.31 and Lk. 9.22, which they had not understood because their expectations as to his kingdom were false, and compare Ps. 16.10 with Lk. 24.25 and 44. Contrast the dullness of the disciples with the apprehension of the chief priests who asked Pilate to make the tomb "sure until the third day," Mt. 27.62-66.

"What was it that John believed? That Jesus had risen? Surely this, but further that as he had risen, he was therefore the divine Son of God. The conviction then

produced was the origin of his Gospel, the source of a life of loving devotion for the apostle John" (Dr. C. R. Erdman).

"That is a great thing, that Jesus is a living Savior, and therefore still with us; yet thousands who confess his name do not realize it, thousands of those who at heart believe it still do not act upon it" (E. E. Hale).

The two disciples returned to their headquarters at Jerusalem, satisfied that nothing more could be learned at the tomb. "The day of expression had not yet come for John. Peter was always bursting into speech. John had a way of breaking into silence. So now, in the hour when the sunrise of a new day burst over the hills of his life, he retired into his own heart, to meditate and feel and understand. The day would come when he would speak. The day would come when he would ripen and his words would have the ripeness which comes from years of brooding thought. Today he was full of inarticulate joy" (Dr. Lynn H. Hough).

Peter and John Running to the Sepulcher Eugène Burnand

III. MARY MAGDALENE AND THE ANGELS, verses 11-13. The two disciples returned to Jerusalem, but "a stronger affection riveted to the spot a weaker nature," and Mary, who had followed Peter and John to the tomb, remained standing outside, weeping. Looking into the tomb she saw two angels clothed in white and sitting where the body of Jesus had lain.

"Too many of us are like Peter and John, who, running to the sepulcher and at once returning, saw only the grave-cloths. Too few of us are like Mary, who, standing in contemplation of that which she could but dimly apprehend, saw the angels and heard their message" (Dr. Hugh Black).

One angel only is mentioned in Matthew and Mark: as a commentator observes, minute and detailed agreement in independent narrations under such circumstances would be suspicious. The Greek word for an *angel* means *one who is sent with a message,* and their message for Mary was, "Woman, why weepest thou?" There was no cause for weeping, but great reason for rejoicing—the Lord had risen!

"Mary expected to find Christ in the sepulcher, and when he was not there, she wept. We share the feeling of Mary, and we have all shed tears over a lost Christ. We expect to find him in our own creed, in our own way, in our own place, and when Christ appears in some other way, we do not recognize him; he ceases to be God and becomes a common gardener. How long, O Lord, how long before thy people are able to find thee everywhere, in every honest endeavor for right living, on every page in history; in every step of civilization; in every body of believers; in every groping soul finding its way into the light? When did Christ ever crowd himself into a sepulcher to stay there? You will find Christ everywhere, if you look" (Dr. Griffin W. Bull).

"Mary's intense emotion of love and longing preoccupied her against the shock of the apparition: even the instincts of terror were quenched" (George Reith), and she answered in the same words she had used to Peter and John, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." "It is as if these words had been the unceasing rhythm of her thoughts all the time. She could think of nothing else. She was magnetized by sorrow" (R. C. Gillie).

IV. JESUS REVEALS HIMSELF TO MARY MAGDALENE, verses 14-16. "John's insight taught him first to conclude that his Lord had risen: Mary's want brought her Lord first to satisfy it," for as she turned she beheld Jesus standing.

But she did not recognize him. The synoptists (Mt. 28.17; Mk. 16.12; Lk. 24.16, 37) and John in 21.4 speak of his form as altered; Mary's eyes, moreover, were dim with tears. "Woman, why weepest thou, whom seekest thou?" Jesus questioned.

"The question implied that her weeping was due to her ignorance of a blessed fact that would have made it useless; and my weeping at the grave of lost joys, or lost hopes, or lost ambitions may often be the same ignorant and useless thing" (G. H. Knight).

"They were the first words of the Risen Lord. It is so easy to imagine that the first utterance of the Conqueror of death would have been different—some command or rebuke to his apostles, some great declaration of victory. No; it is an inquiry concerning a woman's sorrow and a woman's quest. It is as if our Lord was declaring that, his own pain and grief for ever past, he still cared more for the griefs and struggles of mankind than anything else" (R. C. Gillie).

"'Woman, why weepest thou?' Father, mother, wife, child, friend and acquaintance, why weepest thou? Their Lord is not here, he is risen, and his own are with him" (Dr. W. L. Watkinson).

Supposing Jesus to be the gardener, or garden-keeper, the only one who would naturally be there at that hour, Mary said to him, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." How natural it was that she did not mention Jesus by name: there could be no one else thought of.

"Mary," said Jesus, and "Rabboni," Teacher, she cried. "It was only an instant's work, but all the quick emotions of a life-time were endured. That voice! In a flash the cross was forgotten, the tomb forgotten; the mystery of how the dead could live again was unthought of. 'Mary!' 'Master!' Deep called unto deep, and the testimony of the inner spirit defied all logic and all contradiction. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'"

"Touch me not," said Jesus as Mary would have grasped his feet in adoration. "The words were spoken to teach Mary that there was a far higher way of touching Christ than with the hand of flesh; the truer way to lay hold of Christ was by the grasp of faith" (Augustine). "For I am not yet ascended unto the Father," he added. The old, familiar fellowship was not to be renewed, only after his ascension a new and spiritual communion would be established between him and his followers. "But go"—You have gazed long enough at the empty tomb—"go and make known the wonderful fact that its Occupant has risen."

"This lesson should come home with special power to the hearts of Christian women, for to women was first given on Easter morning the commission to go and tell that Christ is risen."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What appearance did Lazarus present when he "came forth" from the tomb? (A lesson of last year.) What did Martha say when Jesus told her that her brother should rise? What answer did Jesus make?

The Burial of Jesus. To Golgotha came Joseph of Arimathea, a secret follower of Jesus, and removed Jesus's body from the cross, having received Pilate's permission. Nicodemus, "he who at the first came to him by night," came also with a lavish gift of a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. Together they tenderly wrapped Jesus's body in linen cloths and spices according to the Jewish custom. Then they bore the body to a near-by garden and laid it in a newly-built tomb belonging to Joseph.

The Tomb Made Secure. From the Synoptists we learn that a stone was rolled against the door of the tomb and, at the request of the chief priests and Pharisees, Pilate sent a guard to seal the tomb and keep a watch. "We remember," said the Pharisees to Pilate, "that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again'; command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, 'He is risen from the dead'; and the last error will be worse than the first." "Go, make it as sure as you can," returned Pilate.

The Resurrection. We have no accounts of the resurrection. Matthew is the only Evangelist who speaks of the event itself, and he does so vaguely, not stating that any one saw it: "And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon

it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and become as dead men." The other Evangelists begin with the fact that the stone was rolled away.

For the Blackboard. *Saturday, April 8.* The Guard Stationed at the Tomb.

Sunday, April 9. Visit of Mary Magdalene and the Other Women to the Tomb; Mary Magdalene Hastens to Tell Peter and John; Christ's Appearance to the Other Women; Visit of Peter and John to the Tomb; Christ's Appearance to Mary Magdalene; the Guard Report to the Chief Priests; in the Afternoon Christ Appears to Peter (1 Cor. 15.5); Christ Appears to the Two Disciples on the Way to Emmaus; In the Evening Christ Appears to the Disciples at Jerusalem in the Absence of Thomas.

Sunday, April 16. Christ Appears to Thomas with the Other Disciples.

Later. Christ Appears to Seven Disciples by the Sea of Galilee; he Appears to Many Disciples on a Mountain in Galilee.

Thursday, May 18. Christ's Final Appearance and Ascension from the Mount of Olives.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Underneath the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem is shown the tomb which since the time of Constantine has been the traditional location of Christ's burial. Very early in the Christian centuries it was deemed a sacred privilege to visit "the place where the Lord lay." When the Arabian followers of Mohammed gained possession of the Holy Land, pilgrims were still allowed to come and go, but in the eleventh century the Turks became masters of Palestine and soon all Europe was aroused over the fact that pilgrimages were no longer permitted. Then it was that the famous Crusades began, "to rescue the tomb of Christ from the infidels." Now at every Easter time Jerusalem is crowded with pilgrims, some twenty thousand being the estimated number usually gathered there from all parts of the world. Five or six hundred years ago the Mohammedans, fearing some outbreak against themselves would result at this time, devised a feast which they call that of *Neby-Mousa,* the Prophet Moses, and this brings every year at the same time a great crowd of Arabs and other Mohammedans.

By most modern scholars the accepted site of the entombment is the hill above Jerusalem's Grotto. See the last lesson. Here there is shown a "Garden Tomb" which, though one cannot believe it to be the very tomb, is yet so like what that tomb must have been, that the visitor who enters is satisfied. One has to stoop as did Peter in order to look in.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15.3-8) that his first message to them was of the death and resurrection of Christ. The fact and the great significance of Christ's resurrection had the leading place in the teaching of the early Christians. Has it in your teaching?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
PROOFS OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Beginning the Lesson. The Sabbath began at sunset on the day of the crucifixion. At that hour Mary of Magdala left the tomb of Jesus. Saturday, the Sabbath, was the darkest day of her life. Not only had she lost her Lord under the most harrowing circumstances, but she thought she had lost him for ever. The hours must have seemed well-nigh unendurable and her grief must have had full play. At the end of the day, she bought spices and prepared them that evening for the embalming of the body of Jesus. It was the last tribute she could pay him. On Sunday morning, with other women, she started for the tomb, all unaware of the wondrous event that had meanwhile taken place.

John's Account of the Resurrection. As in the story of the crucifixion, so in the account of the resurrection—or rather, for the actual account of resurrection itself is not recorded in any of the Gospels, of what happened after the resurrection—we find an entire restraint, an absolute absence of any straining after effect. Though John has to tell of the greatest wonder of the world, he writes as if feeling that a resurrection was, as it were, a wholly natural thing in the case of Jesus, a thing which anyone, remembering all that had gone before, would naturally expect. The resurrection occupies a very important place, of course, in the development of John's main purpose. If Jesus had, as he claimed, life in himself—if no man took

his life from him, but he voluntarily surrendered it—if the foregoing history is to have its fitting close—it was not possible that Jesus should be conquered by death. Yet John does not, speaking strictly, attempt to *prove* the resurrection. He simply recounts some events in connection with it, leaving them to work their own effect. What he wishes his readers to realize is that the whole thing fits in. The simple narrative of these things forms part of the cumulative proof—as distinct from a logical demonstration—which the Evangelist is building up, and contributes its share to that impression, made up of many causative elements, that here is the Son of God.—Henry W. Clark, in Westminster New Testament.

How to have Faith in the Truth of the Resurrection. "The resurrection of Christ does not admit of absolute demonstration. Undoubtedly the testimony in favor of the event is strong. It was evidently unquestioned by a great number of intelligent people living at the time of its reputed occurrence. So much force as all such evidence has is to be estimated at its logical value.

So Columbus estimated at its logical value all the indications that were afforded him of the existence of another continent. To most people of that generation those evidences appeared insufficient to warrant fitting out vessels of exploration, and it was long before funds requisite for the purpose could be secured. And the magnificent result and discovery was due to the fact that in Columbus's mind there was room for America and in the minds of the other people there was not. He could see beyond the point where he could see distinctly. The scheme of things as it lay drafted in his mind was drawn on a scale large enough to comprehend everything that was already known; everything that was indifferently surmised; and a good deal beside that neither he nor any one else had ever conjectured.

"Thomas would not believe in the risen Christ because risen Christs were not a part of the universe as he had plotted it. The other disciples did believe in a risen Christ because they were large enough to be able to think farther than they could think clearly, and because they were able to push the chariot of their convictions over a road that had not been logically passed. And undoubtedly when Thomas did finally accept Christ it was not because he had reasoned him out by pressing his hands into the print of the nails, but because of having had divinely wrought in him a capacity for larger persuasions than his mental and moral contractedness had been hitherto able to accommodate.

"And that is still the way in which we have to acquire the art of great believing, the art of immense assurance of faith and the triumphant joy that is bound to go along with it."

A Proof of the Resurrection in the Changed Disciples. We cannot but wonder at the amazing change which took place in the disciples at this period. More than once it has occurred in history that the inspiration of a great event has transformed ordinary men into heroes, but it is not possible to find a parallel to the profound change of character and force we witness in the disciples when we compare what they were before and after the decease of their Master. In the former period they appear singularly deficient in intellectual and spiritual comprehension, whilst later they deal like masters with the highest questions. In moral character they are immensely ennobled. And from a state of doubt, cowardice and despair they give the world the finest example of conviction, valor, and optimism it has ever looked upon. There must have been a cause, and an adequate cause, for this surprising conversion, magnification, transfiguration. It was found in the fact of their assurance of their Lord's resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven. In the light and power of this extraordinary and glorious fact they became heroes and martyrs.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

The Chain of Witnesses to the Fact of Christ's Resurrection. "Christ is risen." The chorus sing about it. The preachers proclaim it. The multitudes believe it. Does it seem strange that because a small group of sad-eyed, discouraged men and women, almost two thousand years ago, suddenly came to believe that a Man they had loved had returned to life after being executed on the cross, people should still believe it today? Nineteen centuries is a long time, and Palestine is far away. How is it that the belief of the first Christians has laid hold upon us?

It is not enough to explain it as an old tradition, handed down from generation to generation. If the experience of the apostles and the three Marys and the five hundred brethren to whom he made himself known was the only reason for keeping Easter, it is not probable that Easter would still be kept. Faith that is only handed on does not survive as this faith has survived. There must be another reason.

The other reason is that there has never been an age since the first Christian age

until now when there were not among the peoples of the earth those to whom Christ had become a living person. The healing of the seamless dress has been by beds of pain. In the midst of the storm and the stress of life, despairing men and women have reached out to touch him, and they have touched him and been made whole again. Martyrs, stretched on the agonizing rack, have heard him. Other martyrs, bound among the burning fagots, have seen him in the fire. Tempted men have sought him in the hour of their temptation, and his arm has sustained them. Such as they do not need to be told that long ago, on a Sunday morning in the spring, the grave released him. They know that he is released, for he has become the living power of their lives.

When the eleven, after the tragic death of Judas, chose a twelfth apostle, they did so that he might become a witness with them of the resurrection. Since then, from all nations and tribes, a great company whom God alone can number has been added to the chain of witnesses. Daily their number is increased. Easter is Easter, not because Jesus rose long ago, but because Jesus still lives, and because there are among us those who know that he lives.—The Youth's Companion.

Christianity a Proof. Whatever may be thought by skeptics concerning Christianity, there is no doubt that it is the greatest moral force the world has ever known, and no doubt that historically it is founded upon the faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If there had not been this vital faith, Christianity would have perished in the death of its Master. It is wholly inconsistent with the moral order of the world to believe that the greatest moral force in the world is founded on either a fraud or a delusion.—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

The Best Proof. The best answer any one of us can make when questioned for proof of the resurrection of the Lord is the humble, but irrefutable, one,—"Christ liveth in me."—Dr. J. Stuart Holden.

For Discussion. 1. Proofs of the resurrection. The Christian life is the best evidence of the living Christ.—Dr. H. F. Cope.

2. If I can but believe with all my heart that my Lord, whom cruel hands nailed long ago to a tree, is indeed alive and triumphant for evermore, I may look with quietness on sorrow and death, and forget my grief in the light of immortality.—Dr. John E. McFadyen.

Questions to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did not the Risen Christ reveal himself to his enemies? 2. Why did he reveal himself to his friends? 3. What does Lent commemorate, and why do all denominations observe Lent more now than formerly? 4. How do you think of the ascension? 5. Toward the end of his Gospel John tells us that "these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and believing ye may have life in his name": has this been the result of your nine months' study of the Gospels?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER DEATH

Beginning the Lesson. The King was dead! John, and Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and some of the other women who loved their Lord, had seen him die upon the cross. At evening a rich man, called Joseph of Arimathea, went to Pilate and asked for Jesus's body, for he loved Jesus and would show him the highest honor in his power. The body of Jesus was taken from the cross and tenderly wrapped in fine linen and laid in Joseph's tomb.

The disciples were in despair. Their King was dead. In other homes in the city there were feasting and rejoicing, for it was the glad Passover time, but for the little group of Jesus's faithful disciples all was sadness and gloom. How could they ever be happy again, now that they had lost their Friend and King?

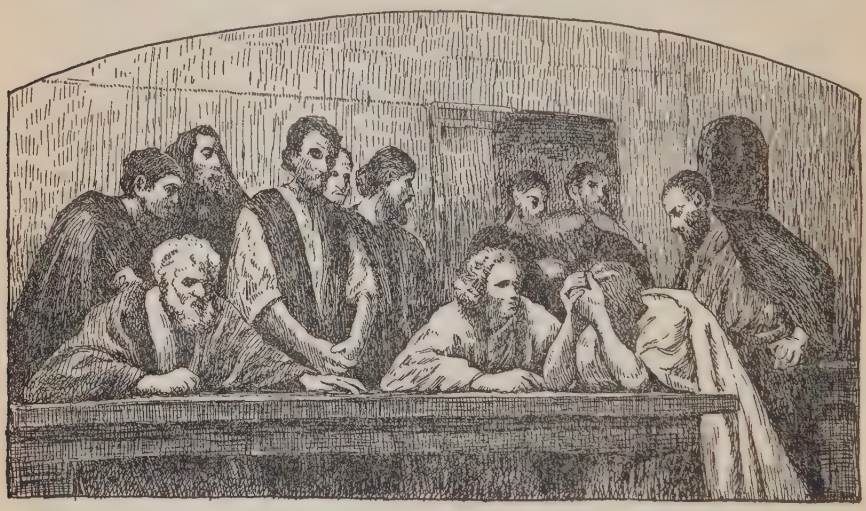
Saturday passed. Very early on Sunday morning, while most of the people in the city were still asleep, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb. Why? They knew that a heavy stone had been rolled before the entrance. "Who shall roll us away the stone?" they anxiously asked each other on the way, for they wanted to enter with the fragrant spices they had prepared for the body of their Lord. What wonderful surprise awaited them?

The Empty Tomb. That empty tomb means the conquest of death. The Captive proved mightier than the captor. He emerged from the prison as the Lord of the prison, and death reeled at his going. In the risen Savior death is dethroned; he takes his place at the footstool to do the bidding of his sovereign Lord and

King. And that empty tomb means the conquest of sin. Sin had done its worst, and had failed. All the forces of hell had been rallied against the Lord, and above them all he rose triumphant and glorified. A little while ago I discovered a spring. I tried to choke it. I heaped sand and gravel upon it; I piled stones above it! And through them all it emerged, noiselessly and irresistibly, a radiant resurrection!

And so the empty tomb becomes the symbol of a thoroughfare between life in time and life in the unshadowed Presence of our God. Death is now like a short tunnel which is near my home; I can look through it and see the other side! In the risen Lord death becomes transparent. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in My Daily Meditation.

Towards Evening of Easter Day. We do not know what the Lord Jesus did through the noontide hours of Easter day. Whether he spent those hours alone,



The Sorrowing Disciples on the Day after the Crucifixion Eugène Burnand

thinking his great thoughts of purity and peace, in some quiet part of the garden, or whether he went about, unknown and unrecognized, doing good to people. We know that after he rose from the dead he had the power of going about without being recognized; and possibly all that first forenoon he went on with the work he loved best, going where some little sick child was sleeping, laying his hand on the hot little forehead, and making the child wake up quite well; going to some boy tempted to do wrong, and whispering such words of courage in his ear that the boy grew brave and conquered. We do not know if he did any such thing; but if he did, it would be just like him.

But when the day gets on past noon, we do know just where the risen Savior was, and what he did. About seven and a half miles northwest from Jerusalem was a little village called Emmaus, and it is on the road leading to that village we find Jesus walking in the middle of Easter afternoon. He is not alone. Two men are with him—men who had known him and loved him before he was crucified. Strange to say, they do not know him now. If you ask me how that could have been, I can only answer: "I do not know how it could have been." I only know that the Bible says "their eyes were holden, or prevented, so that they should not know him." The risen Lord had that wonderful power by which he could keep himself unknown until he saw fit to make himself known. These two men were talking about Jesus himself; so sadly, so hopelessly. They said: "He is dead." Their hope was all gone. And when they had told this Stranger how badly they felt, the Stranger—(not telling them who he was) began to talk to them about Jesus. And he talked so tenderly, so wisely, so wonderfully, he seemed to know so well how to speak to them, and how to comfort them, they began to feel courage and hope coming back to their hearts.

By and by they reached Emmaus, as the shadows of the late afternoon were

lengthening, and as the sun was far down toward the western hills. They reached the door of the house where they were going to stay. The two men stopped; but the Stranger, saying only, I suppose, a pleasant "Good-night," walked right on. Then they realized how much he had helped them, and they could not stand the thought of his going on and leaving them. "Abide with us," they cried. "Stay with us, we are so lonely as the evening comes on, you have helped us; stay with us, talk to us, still help us to be brave." He stopped. He turned. He went into the house with them. As the sun went down a strange light seemed shining in his face. They wondered, yet could not understand. Supper was ready and they sat down. He went to the head of the table as though they were his guests, rather than he theirs. He took some bread, closed his eyes, and asked a blessing. As he prayed light shone in his face. They opened their eyes, looked again, and knew him,—Jesus risen from the dead!

And I wish that he may meet us, in his risen beauty, and walk along at our side, and talk to our very hearts until they, too, burn with love, and grand desires, and deep responses.

What would be the most natural thing for him to talk about? I suppose the very same things he talked about on the road to Emmaus long ago. He would tell us why he died, and why he has risen from the dead, and what his death and his rising ought to mean to us for whom he died and rose again. Particularly, I think, this last: what his death and his rising ought to mean to us for whom he died and rose again. There is a meaning in his dying and his rising that ought to change our lives, that ought to make our way of living different from what it would be if we did not know, or if, knowing, we did not believe that he died and rose again for us. There are great New Testament words which describe what his death and his rising ought to mean to us. "He died for all (why?) that they that live (i.e., you and I who are alive now) should not longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again." (2 Cor. 5.15.) There is the very heart of the idea,—"That they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him." "Not unto themselves, but unto him." That is surely the very thing Christ wishes to talk about with us, as he walks with us, in his Spirit, and opens to us the Scripture.

How ought we, who believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, to live our lives? One answer, and one only: "Not unto ourselves, not unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us, and rose again."

Living unto yourself means claiming yourself for yourself. Living unto him means carrying about with you the grand thought that you, in your spirit, in your mind, yes, even in your body, belong unto Christ who has redeemed you with his precious blood; that your life is a great trust which God has committed unto you, and which you truly want to use in whatever way is best, according to God's definition of best.

Living unto him is caring with all your heart for the things that are great and good and broad and godlike,—caring for truth, caring for a broad usefulness, caring to influence and to save others, caring to keep very, very close in heart, mind, and life to the Lord Jesus Christ.—Condensed from Two Chapters of The Silver Cup, by Dr. C. C. Hall.

Because He Lives, We shall Live also. Against the wall on one side of the corridors of the Vatican stand rows of pagan marbles, each bearing some despairing message such as "Farewell, farewell, forever farewell." Against the wall on the other side are rows of Christian marbles, and here one reads words of cheer and comfort, such as "In hope." The Christian believes that for him, as there was for Christ, there will be a resurrection from the dead.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

The Lord is risen indeed,
He is here for your love, for your need—
Not in the grass, nor the sky,
But here where men live and die.—Gilder.

Lift your glad voices in triumph on high,
For Jesus hath risen, and man shall not die.—Henry Ware.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Tell the story of another appearance of Jesus during the forty days. 2. Commit to memory Mt. 28.19 and 20. 3. Where does Luke give a fuller account of the ascension? 4. Why were the disciples so joyful on their return to Jerusalem?

THE FORTY DAYS AND THE ASCENSION

GOLDEN TEXT: Ye are witnesses of these things. Luke 24.48

LESSON Luke 24.13-53 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 24

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 28.16-20; Mark 16.14-20; John 20.24 to 21.25; Acts 1.1-11

LUKE 24.36 And as they spake these things, he himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. 37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit. 38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having. 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? 42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish. 43 And he took it, and ate before them.

44 And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me. 45 Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; 46 and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 Ye are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.

50 And he led them out until *they were* over against Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. 51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: 53 and were continually in the temple, blessing God.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. CHRIST APPEARS ON EASTER EVENING TO THE ELEVEN, verses 36-43. Luke follows his account of the resurrection of Christ (the empty tomb seen by the three women and by Peter) with an account of Christ's appearance that afternoon to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and then gives an account of his appearance that evening to the eleven apostles. While the two to whom Christ had made himself known at Emmaus in the breaking of bread were telling the apostles in Jerusalem of their wonderful talk with the Risen Lord, he himself suddenly appeared in their midst and said, "Peace be unto you," the customary form of greeting. Notwithstanding what they had just heard, they were greatly terrified, for they supposed that they beheld a spirit, that is, "a form recognizable as that of Jesus, but of Jesus not risen but come from the world of the dead disembodied or only with an apparent body."

"Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart?" Jesus asked; and then to reassure them, to convince them that he was a living Man and not a disembodied spirit, he bade them see and touch his hands and his feet: "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having," he told them.

"The resurrection body could evidently offer resistance to touch; but its nature escapes our conception" (Dr. A. E. Garvie).

While they still disbelieved for joy ("a curious yet real state of mind"), he asked for something to eat, and when they gave him a piece of a boiled fish he ate before them. One commentator suggests that, as the materiality thus evinced seems inconsistent with the pneumatic nature of Christ's body as suggested by sudden appearing and disappearing, the materiality was assumed by Jesus for the moment to satisfy the disciples that he had a body and that he was risen.

II. THE PARTING WORDS OF JESUS DURING THE FORTY DAYS, verses 44-49. Luke's narrative reads as if all these farewell words of Jesus were spoken at that Easter evening meeting with the eleven, but in Acts 1.3 Luke tells us that Christ "showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God." Read Mt. 28.16-20; Mk. 16.14-18; Jn. 20.24 to 21.23.

"These are my words," said Jesus. What words? "As they stand in Luke's narrative the sense must be: These events (death and resurrection) fulfil the words I spoke to you before my death" (Expositor's Greek Testament). He had told them that what was written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning him would be fulfilled. "The law, the prophets, and the Psalms stand for

the three divisions of the Old Testament Canon recognized by the Jews. 'The Prophets' include the historical books except Chronicles and Ruth. 'Psalms' stand for 'the writings,' that is, the third division of the Canon of which it is the principal book" (Dummelow).

Then opened he their minds, that they might understand the Scriptures; and the facts which he impressed upon their minds are luminous with truths which are needed by the disciples of Christ today. "Among them are such facts as these: The Scriptures contain authoritative messages concerning Christ; these messages can be understood only by those who believe in Christ and are guided by him; the essential truths concerning Christ center in the facts of his death and resurrection; in witness of the salvation thus secured, repentance and forgiveness of sins can be preached; this salvation is to be proclaimed in all the world; the followers of Christ are the messengers by whom this good news is to be made known; the power for such proclamation is imparted by the Spirit of Christ who was manifested in new power on the Day of Pentecost, and who is now an abiding Presence and a Source of limitless strength to all who seek to do the will of Christ and to glorify his name" (Dr. C. R. Erdman).

Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jersualem.

"Every movement of the Spirit is from the center out. We pray for great revivals. But why should we pray for great revivals when we neglect the people round about us, our own relatives and friends? Why should we pray for the things that are in the future when there is a crisis that is imminent, which God is precipitating at this moment in our own soul? We are thinking of the distant problems, and the Spirit of God is dealing with current problems, with the crisis which we have postponed again and again, year after year. Some confession, perhaps; something that is hard; something from which we recoil, and have recoiled for a dozen years; but that is the point of contact with reality, more than praying for revivals. Shall we not face it? Shall we not ask God to give us a heroism to deal with the near rather than with the far?" (John Douglas Adam).

Ye are witnesses of these things. This preaching to the nations is to be your work and "It is manifest treason to the King to hold back his message."

"Christ expects every follower to be a living witness for him. "A good example is the tallest kind of preaching," said an aged African: we witness by our lives as well as by our lips.

"Behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you," that is, the Holy Spirit, Acts 1.4: "but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high." This power from on high is usually thought of as a sudden acquisition, but is it not rather a steady accumulation?

He who constantly waits upon God, who tarries in the Upper Room, becomes equipped for Christian service. "There the disciple of Christ is emptied of self by displacement, as his every capacity is filled with the Divine Spirit. There he learns the weakness of his own fancied strength, and the depth of his need. There he discovers the unmeasured possibility of a life united to Christ" (Dr. J. Stuart Holden).

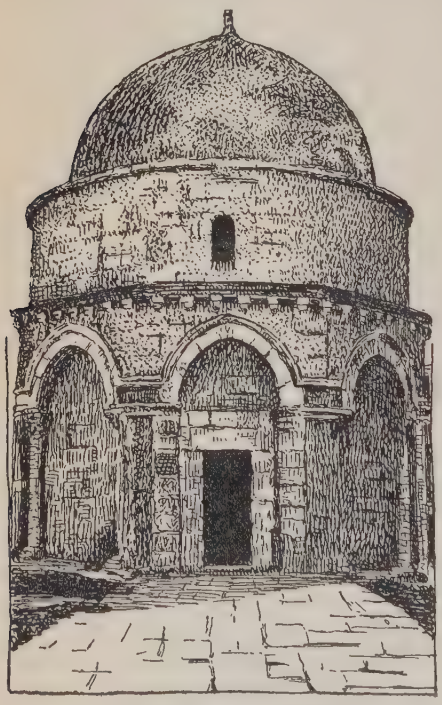
III. AN ACCOUNT OF THE ASCENSION AT THE END OF THE FORTY DAYS, verses 50-53. At last came the final farewell. Read Luke's fuller account of this in Act 1.6-12. Jesus led his disciples out of the city, over the old familiar route which they had last taken with him on the night of the betrayal. Out through the Eastern gate, across the brook Kidron, up the farther side of the valley and past the Garden of Gethsemane until they stood upon the Mount of Olives over against Bethany. There with his hands uplifted in blessing he parted from them and ascended—was admitted into the presence of God. "As his Incarnation was not a physical descent, but a lowly entrance upon the earthly conditions of human life, so his Ascension was not a physical ascent, but a glorious return into the spiritual realms" (J. Grange Radford).

"There is a simple child notion of the ascension—of his body passing through earth's atmosphere into the ether beyond and then on and on through infinite spaces to the throne of the Eternal Heavens. It is a child notion. Literally conceived it leads to childish questions: Is Heaven a place, or a state of being? Is it a place in some fixed local direction? How can there be any Above or Below on a planet constantly revolving? But our child notion, though a misapprehension, is not so bad for a rough working idea—a simple symbol of the truth which the ascension

represents, that the Lord in his spiritual body was passing into the invisible order, returning to that sphere of being from which he came. We believe that the visible event which we call the ascension was his kindly condescension to simple human minds. We naturally connect that higher life which is beyond our present comprehension with the blue heavens above, or the starry heights beyond the blue. In concession to this simple thought, instead of just disappearing as at other times, he rose from the earth and a cloud received him. It only meant that he had passed from our present sphere of existence to another sphere beyond our own" (J. Paterson-Symth).

"Perhaps the most superb face in art is that of the Virgin in Titian's Assumption at Venice. A man has been seen to sit motionless—almost breathless for hours, rapt in the fascination of that face and the spell of that great picture. The wonder is not the woman alone, but the rich bathing splendor into which she rises. It is humanity being drawn home by the hovering heaven. Hid somewhere underfoot in the heart of this rock-crusted globe is the seat of the power called gravitation which holds man's body down. Anchored in the hidden heart of God above is the attraction which controls the spirit and commands and orders home a liberated humanity when it slips the leash of matter and goes free" (Dr. William V. Kelly).

And in his glory the disciples rejoiced. They returned to Jerusalem and at the hours of worship were always in the temple, blessing God. It is often remarked that a writer of fiction would have made the disciples lament the departure of their Lord. Six weeks earlier, when Jesus told them plainly that he was soon to leave them, their hearts were filled with sorrow. There is no way in which we can account for this reversal of their feeling except by the fact that they were assured Christ had been victorious over death and the grave. Paul had caught the ascension joy when he wrote, "It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."



The Chapel of the Ascension

"Let us think of Christ as that little band did when they returned to the city with great joy; and let us take heed that we obey the parting injunctions as lovingly as we have often kept the final instructions of dear ones leaving us for a time" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson. When had Jesus told his disciples that he should suffer and rise again on the third day? How had his words affected them? What did his promise of rising again lead the authorities to do about his tomb? What do we know about his resurrection? To whom did the Risen Savior first reveal himself?

The Forty Days. "Him God raised up the third day," declared Peter in his discourse at Cæsarea (Acts 10), "and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead."

After his resurrection Christ did not manifest himself to everybody; he did not appear to his enemies nor to the indifferent; he appeared only to his friends—to Mary and then to the other women, to Peter, to two disciples on their way to Emmaus, to ten apostles and subsequently to eleven, to seven men approaching the seashore, to the whole number of apostles and

afterwards to five hundred brethren at once, then to James, and finally to the little group gathered round him on the Mount of Olives. The stories of his appearances are fragmentary, and we do not know the consecutive order of all the events. His visits were occasional, sudden and mysterious. They served their purpose of accustoming the disciples to think of him as a Spiritual Presence, "removed from them and yet not unmindful of them, a Living Friend whose mode of working was changed, but whose heart was the same."

For the Blackboard. *Sunday, April 9.*

Sunday, April 16. Christ Appears to Thomas with the Other Disciples.

Later. Christ Appears to Seven Disciples by the Sea of Galilee; he Appears to Many Disciples on a Mountain in Galilee.

Thursday, May 18. Christ's Final Appearance and Ascension from the Mount of Olives.

The Place of the Ascension. It was on the Mount of Olives in the vicinity of Bethany. The Chapel of the Ascension marks the traditional site upon the ridge of the Mount. It is octagonal in form and was built by the Crusaders. The eight arcades were originally open, but the Mohammedans walled up seven sides and built a new cupola without any opening in the center. At the entrance of the court is a minaret which also dates back to the Crusaders; from its top one can look upon the city of Jerusalem and on even to the Dead Sea and the Jordan.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Professor Palmer once remonstrated with his wife, Alice Freeman Palmer, because she gave herself so freely to everyone, instead of conserving her time and energy for her writing. "It is people that count," returned Mrs. Palmer. "You want to put yourself into people; they touch other people; these others still, and so you go on working forever."

Mrs. Palmer was right. To this day there are many who testify that she lives in the lives of those whom she directly inspired to truer and nobler living, and through them in many other lives. It was the method of the Master. Is it not your method?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE EVER-LIVING CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. Lent is nominally a part of the religious life of but two of the great Christian bodies of this country,—the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Episcopal churches,—yet it has come in recent years to be more or less generally observed by all.

Why is this the case? The tendency of the religious life of the day is toward that which is practical; yet here is a drift toward something which, in the minds of many persons, is associated with ritualism. Men and women who belong to none of the churches which formally observe Lent now modify their habits considerably during a period of forty days, to conform to this ancient Christian fast. They may not follow any of the rules in regard to strict fasting or even to abstaining from meat, but they do make changes in their daily habits which are quite as significant.

In many of the large cities there are daily Lenten services in churches so situated as to attract business men. Brokers leave their tickers for an hour at noon, and spend the time in listening to a brief address. Sunday congregations are larger and attendance at places of amusement is smaller.

The explanation is doubtless simple. It is that other churches besides those which have been mentioned, and perhaps persons outside of churches have begun to feel that it is good to give a part of the year especially to the life of the soul and to spiritual things; to recall the fasting and temptations and the last earthly days of the Master, and to rededicate their aims and ambitions.

The age, so far from being one which encourages theological or ecclesiastical differences, is impatient and heedless of them. Men of all creeds are becoming broad enough to recognize a beautiful custom, no matter in what church they find it, and to adopt every custom that makes for purity of life and spiritual advancement.—The Youth's Companion.

The Training of the Forty Days. All through the life of Jesus a prominent purpose was the training of the men to whom he would commit the carrying out of his Kingdom on earth after his visible presence was withdrawn. That training still went on after he rose from the dead in the mysterious forty days before the ascension.

The divine purposes in the manifestations of the Risen Christ were to demonstrate the reality of the resurrection and the identity of "this same Jesus" who rose from the dead, and to prepare his disciples for the coming withdrawal of his visible presence, to enable them to realize the future abiding supernatural presence when that visible presence should be withdrawn.

The first was easy enough. The second by no means so. The wild delight of that Easter Day seemed to leave little room for any further thought than this: The Lord is risen. The beloved Comrade and Master is back with us. He whom we saw dead is alive again. He whom we trusted should have redeemed Israel has not failed us after all.

Probably at first they did not stop to think whether it was a simple coming to life under the old conditions like Lazarus. Probably they did not know, and I suppose they did not care to know, that the resurrection was the beginning of a new order, that it was a new, mysterious, glorified life into which the Lord had risen.

But they had to be taught this, else they never could grip the great thought of his continued and abiding presence all the days to come, not with them only but with the whole Church of the future.

Studying carefully we can see now that in all his appearances, step by step, he was teaching of that new life as they could bear it. In his very first appearance (it was to Mary Magdalene) that lesson was begun. In her first wondering joy she throws herself at his feet, "Rabboni! My Master!" She has found again the Friend whom she had lost; but no more than that. She has no loftier title than the old one, My Master! My Teacher! He is to her the same human Jesus. His resurrection is but a return to the old life. She would clasp his feet with loving, reverent hands. Therefore in his reply he corrects and raises her thought: "Touch me not. Do not take hold of me. Do not cling to me. Things are changed. But go and tell my brethren to meet me." It was the first indication that the old intimacy was to be exchanged for a higher fellowship.

So with the disciples on the Emmaus road that evening. They felt the mystery in his presence. Their hearts burned within them as he walked and talked with them. But he did not reveal himself until the end. Then when they knew him he remained visible just long enough to make them certain of his identity. As the old familiar intercourse was about to be resumed he withdrew himself from their sight, and so the truth dawned on them that he belonged to a new order, that the claims of the invisible world were on him, a world into which they could not follow him yet.

Then he appeared in the midst to the assembled disciples—suddenly, unexpectedly, "when the doors were shut." We in our present ignorance cannot know the change which was brought in our Lord's resurrection body, yet there is something of the mystery revealed which claims our reverent attention. Doors and walls made no obstacle to him. They were terrified and thought they had seen his ghost. But he comforted them and showed them that it was he himself in radiant bodily form, quite recognizable but no longer subject to earthly conditions.

And so through all the other appearances. He is seen and recognized only as he wills and when he wills. He appears in the midst and is no longer seen coming. He appears unexpectedly and as suddenly disappears. He arranges to meet the disciples in Galilee but does not go with them. When they are there he suddenly appears. He speaks to Thomas words which show that he was present and listening unknown to them all when Thomas expressed his doubt. Thus the conviction of his unseen presence would gradually grow on them.

As the forty days went by the awe and wonder deepened. They see him no longer subject to human needs nor bound by natural laws of earth. How tired he used to be, and hungry and thirsty—how glad he was of shelter in the Bethany home. All this is changed. The risen Christ needs neither shelter nor rest. Forty Days he lingers in the world but in no earthly home. Steadily the conviction grew that their Lord was moving in another and higher sphere of existence than that of the old days on earth.

Gradually, but surely, they learned the lesson of the forty days, that it was the Eternal Son of God in disguise who had been their Comrade and Friend, that he had passed into a higher order, that he could be present with them when they saw him not, that a spiritual and eternal fellowship was to take the place of the temporal and visible.

So effectually did they learn it that at last they could look forward calmly to the great parting which was to come. The most convincing proof that they had learned it is in the story of the ascension. There we might surely have expected sorrow and

desolation, the feeling that earth was a poorer place for ever. There is no sorrow, no desolation. Earth is not poorer but richer and grander. "He was parted from them." "And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy!" For they had learned his lesson of the forty days. He would be "with them always to the end of the world."—Condensed from A People's Life of Christ, by J. Paterson-Smyth.

The Lesson of the Forty Days. May we not learn something for ourselves from the lesson of the forty days—some hints of the life destined one day for men? As far as we can gather from these manifestations of the Risen Lord we, too, when we die and our friends who have died will remain the same men and women and yet become very different men and women. Our life will not be broken in two but transfigured. We shall not lose our identity, our memory, our love. We shall still be ourselves. We shall know and be known. We shall preserve the little traits of character which individualize us here but glorified by an ennobling change of motive and aim.—Dr. J. Paterson-Smyth, in A People's Life of Christ.

Because He Lives, we shall Live also. We should get here a lesson of comfort for our own hearts when we stand by the graves of our Christian dead. "The body of our loved one may be in the grave, but the one we knew and loved is not there—he is with the Lord. Speaking of believers who are departed, St. Paul says they are 'absent from the body,' 'at home with the Lord.' You go to an old house where your friend used to live. You knock, but get no answer. The house is empty. Then you find that your friend has moved to a new house, a larger and better one, on the hill. You stand by the form of your dead and speak, but get no answer. The house of clay is empty. Your friend is not there—he is absent, he has gone away. Where is he? He has moved out of the old house and is now 'at home with the Lord.' This is the story of Christian death. It is life, not death."

Dr. Cornelius Woelfkin was attending Commencement Exercises at Columbia recently, and noticed the eagerness with which a group of boys observed the candidates for degrees as they walked in procession attired in caps and gowns. "Would you like to exchange places with one of those boys who has life all ahead of him?" he questioned Dr. Nichols, his companion at the time. After a little thought the latter replied: "No. I think of life as a long struggle, and when the end comes it is the culminating step. I look forward to it with a great deal of pleasure as the beginning of something far more wonderful than this life."

The Fact of the Ascension. I have always felt that the ascension of Jesus was the event, of all events recorded of him in the Gospels, the most difficult to present to the imagination in any picture of its possible methods or circumstances. We cannot follow it out at all in its details. We have to rest, I think, in the mere fact of his departure in some way unlike the old familiar way of death. Something which had been foreshadowed in the mysterious departures of Enoch and Elijah was fulfilled in the disappearance of the Lord who was so vastly greater than his servants who had gone before him. It could not be that, once having died and then arisen from the dead, he should at last by a new death have yielded to the power which he seemed to have subdued. It could not be that, again living among men, he should just live on forever, so never letting his ministry pass beyond the imperfection of the visible, always drawing the hosts of believers to Jerusalem, instead of lifting them up purely to his spiritual home, in holiness. And so there came a disappearance which was not death; a disappearance strange and mysterious, but not more wonderful than had been the life and character of him who so departed. I think that any man who had watched Jesus's life and understood its wondrousness, and then stood watching to see what would be that strange life's final scene, could have asked nothing more, could hardly even have cared to know the details of method—how this marvelous body had gone, where it had gone—but would have accepted and acknowledged the perfect fitness of the story, when the disciples with calm and solemn faces came back into Jerusalem and only said, "While he blessed us he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of our sight."—Phillips Brooks, in Sermons for the Church Year.

For Discussion. If Jesus came again in the flesh. See article with this title in The Christian Century of Nov. 8, 1923.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE FORTY DAYS AND THE ASCENSION

Beginning the Lesson. What do we mean when we speak of "the forty days" in connection with the close of Christ's life on earth? What other Book besides the Gospels has something to say about this time? Why did Christ remain on earth so

long? Was it not forty days instead of four days because the disciples needed time in which to learn the last lesson in their training-course with the Great Teacher? Until his death actually occurred, as we have seen, they had not been able to grasp the fact that his death was coming and they were to be left alone. While he lived with them they had trusted to his guidance. Now they were to be left to "carry on," to be teachers themselves instead of pupils. During the forty days they became used to his absence during long intervals, and learned to trust him unseen as they had trusted him seen.

This hard lesson they learned, and when he gave them his blessing and left to return to them no more, they went back to Jerusalem with great joy, for they believed his promise that he would be with them always.

These beautiful words, sung by a chorus of angels in Goethe's Faust, express the mood and the purpose of the eleven apostles after he had left them:

Christ is arisen,
Death hath him slain;
Burst ye your prison,
Rend ye each chain!
Songs of praise lead ye,—
Love to show, heed ye,—
Hungry ones feed ye,—
Preaching, on speed ye,—
Coming joys plead ye,—
Christ is the Master near,
Christ he is here!

Ye are Witnesses of These Things. A small magnet is made of steel, but it has a power not possessed by ordinary steel. What gives it this strange power of pulling other metals toward it? It has been rubbed against a very big magnet till some of the power of the big magnet has passed into it. Jesus Christ is the Divine Magnet who attracts all the world to himself: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself," he said in his last public discourse. Christ's disciples are the small magnets who gained their power through living contact with him. "Ye are witnesses of these things," Christ told them. They could bear witness of him because they had lived with him and knew him and loved him. They were able to say, "We know Jesus," and they were able to show by their lives that they knew him: back of their witnessing by words was their witnessing by works. During the remainder of the year we shall study the Acts, the Book which tells us with what great results they bore witness to their Lord, for some of his power had passed into them.

Look Up! Many, many years ago a little group of men stood on the top of a hill, looking up. They were not looking at some mountain peak curbing the sky; nor at the glorious bright clouds sailing overhead; nor at some eagle hovering on mighty wings. Their souls were looking through their eyes, above the eagle, and above the clouds, on—on—on. A few moments ago there had stood at their side a most dear and glorious Friend, who, while he was with them, had put a new meaning into life; had filled their minds with great thoughts; had sympathized with all their fears and troubles; had given their lives a most wonderful peace. And now he is not here; "a cloud of light has received him from their sight." And they know that they have still his work to do, and that he has promised them his Holy Spirit to quicken and freshen all their powers. And so they do not stand longer looking up with their eyes; they come back to their work, and as they try every day to do it better, their souls are always looking up, and the influence of this Friend who has gone upward is lifting their lives in every possible way, and drawing their thoughts up higher and higher.

Let not any of us ever forget what he has done for us! He has opened our understandings, and softened our hearts, and convinced us that Jesus Christ came into the world to make himself a sacrifice for our sins; and all that Jesus suffered he as truly suffered for each of us personally as if he had died this very day, and from the cross had called to us by name, and said, I am dying for you!

And now, how shall I think of Jesus? Let me think of him as the ascended Savior, first coming down and entering perfectly into my life, that I may be reconciled to God by his death and that I may know his sympathy, and then going up, that he may forever draw my heart and mind upward too, as long as I live, that I may by every thought of Christ be lifted up, and made to "look up"—that all my plans and all my work and all my views of life may have that upward influence acting upon them, and become more high and more worthy of him.

I know that I speak to many earnest children and youth, to many who think deeply and intently upon this whole subject of life, and who most truly want to honor Jesus. And to some of them the thought may have come: "Oh! that Jesus had remained here where we could see him with our eyes and talk to him with our

lips!" It is a natural thought; but, nevertheless, we are far better off now. If he had remained we could not have seen him often, perhaps not have spoken to him once in our lives, such crowds would be around him all the time. And you know, he said: "It is expedient, that is, it is good for you, that I go away." Think how good it has been for us that he went away—that he arose, and ascended, and that now every thought of every loyal heart is thus drawn upward too. Oh! how good it is for us that Christ is above us, and that just so far as we love him, and think of him, we reach and look upward!

Some of us love to "look up," even with our natural eyes; we feel rested and inspired and elevated in mind when we look up at the high mountain, or at the soaring bird, or at the fleecy clouds, or at the sun, or at the glittering stars; there seems to be something in us which answers to these high and splendid sights in nature,—a joy, a sense of buoyancy, as if we, too, had wings. Cannot many of us say for ourselves Wordsworth's delicious lines:

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky.

And now, may I not speak of how this same thought of "looking up" may enter into the daily life of us who are here; the thought of looking up, not to clouds or stars alone, but to him who once trod this earth as our suffering Savior, and is now exalted to the glory of the Father, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us.

We can begin every day of our life by looking up! Do you know the third verse of the fifth Psalm? "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." How perfectly natural it is to look up in the morning when you are in the country. When I am down in the country, I come downstairs and go out on the big breezy piazza, and the very first thing I do is to look up. I take a look at the sky; I see which way the wind is blowing; I find out what kind of day it is going to be. Ah! how much in your life and mine depends on that wondrous habit of looking up in the morning, of starting up from our rest as if, almost, we were rising up to begin a new, fresh life, and before we have been compelled to fix our eyes on things around us (to look at our books, or at our practicing, or at our home duties), to look up and greet with conscious thoughts that blessed One who has gone up on high to pray for us and to prepare a place for us; to look up and think of Jesus—holy, blameless, undefiled, separate from sinners, kind, noble, glorious, patient, tender, self-sacrificing. What a beginning to the day that makes; how much it has to do with the way the wind will blow all that day, and what sort of day it will be.

Look up! and remember that Christ, the ascended Son, died for you and rose again, that he might open to you the possibilities of a grander life, and that in this grander life everything is important that touches you in any way. Your health is important, you ought to take care of it as his servant, you ought not to eat or drink or use or do anything that will hurt you and weaken you. Your mind is important, and every sum in arithmetic, every verb in Latin, faithfully labored over, is just so much training to strengthen you to fill the place Christ wants you to fill. Your special talents are important. If you can play or sing or draw or speak or write or teach or keep accounts, or do anything specially well, you are to look up, and ask that he will be pleased to help you to do the very best you can to develop your powers, and to guide you to be of use, if it pleases him, through every one of your gifts, however simple they may be. Look up! that these days of study and of the finding out of what you can do may not be, on the one hand, days of mere drudgery, nor, on the other hand, days of idleness and waste. Look up! and keep your face toward the highest and the best, that you may be more worthy of him who gave the highest and the best he had to give, even his own holy life, for your sake.—Condensed from The Silver Cup, by Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

The Lord is risen indeed,
He is here for your love, for your need—
Not in the grave, nor the sky.
But here where men live and die.—Richard Watson Gilder.

Loyalty to Christ means carrying forward in our century the work he began in his. Dr. C. H. Parkhurst.

In works we do, in prayers we pray,
Life of our life, he lives today.—Whittier.

REVIEW—CLOSING PERIOD OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

GOLDEN TEXT: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and for ever. Hebrews 13.8

DEVOTIONAL READING Revelation 1.9-18

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
CLOSING SCENES IN CHRIST'S LIFE

Loyalty to Christ the King: Lesson I. On the last Sunday of his earthly life, Jesus Christ, as the prophet Zechariah had foretold, made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, meek and riding upon an ass. The whole city was moved. The people acclaimed him King, though they did not really recognize what that kingship meant. "The Romans expected some public rising; the Pharisaical party was aroused to new envy and malice; the Herodians dreaded a possible usurper; but the populace entertained for the moment the idea that their hope was now fulfilled, that the long-dreamed of Messiah had at last appeared, and would lead them to victory." But after looking round about the temple, Jesus passed quietly out of Jerusalem and returned to Bethany for the night. He did no wonderful work. He led no revolt against the hated Roman rulers. The enthusiasm of the country people and the curiosity of the city folk soon waned. Before the week was over the cry of "Blessed is the King!" was changed to "Crucify him!"

Unchanging loyalty to Christ is the mark of all his true followers. Loyalty to the right is grounded on this personal loyalty to him who is wholly righteous. "Christ was for a long time my King," said an earnest follower of his, "but I fear he was only a constitutional sovereign and I was his prime minister. Now he is absolute Lord, and this has made a great difference in my life."

The King's Judgment: Lesson II. You all know Michael Angelo's masterpiece, "The Last Judgment." Which representation do you recall the more vividly, that of the reward of the good, or that of the punishment of the evil? Are not the agonies of the lost so vividly portrayed that they make the chief impression upon your mind?

How is it with Christ's picture of the Judgment? "Why was it that during the last days of his earthly ministry, when clouds were darkening and shadows gathering, he spoke so earnestly with his disciples regarding the final judgment? Did he mean to frighten them into serving him? Did he mean to say, 'You would better serve me. You will be sorry if you do not'? Jesus did not mean to say that. Jesus did not try to frighten men into heaven. He did warn at times, but his warnings were always incidental and secondary to the great appeal that he made to the hearts of men with his mercy and truth.

"Jesus speaks not so much to threaten as to console. He wants the wicked to be afraid, but more than that he wants the righteous to be assured. He wants them to know God's judgments are right, rejoicing the heart. He wants them to know that the tangled skein of life shall some day be unraveled and that the righteous shall triumph."

Remembering Christ Jesus: Lesson III. A Jewish writer says that, though the celebration of the Passover may in course of time be neglected, the Day of Atonement (*Yom-Kippur*) will survive as long as the Jewish community shall maintain its independent religious existence. Neither the Passover nor the Day of Atonement is celebrated in Christian churches, for at the last feast of the Passover held while Christ was on earth, as he instituted the rite which has been observed in all Christian lands from that day to this, he explained that he is himself the Atonement.

In partaking of the rite we receive a new opportunity, for "in the presence of our Master's perfect sacrifice, by the symbols of his passion and death, we are called to give ourselves once more to God."

To those who do not partake of the Lord's Supper in commemoration of him, Phillips Brooks has a word of counsel: "You say, 'Why should I take my place in the visible church? What have I to do with communion?' It ought to make you solemn when you remember how earnestly, how lovingly, in the very last moments of his precious life, your Lord commanded you to do what you have never done. It ought to stir your conscience when you see this world, which needs your Christian influence, robbed of it by your silence."

Christ the Comforter: Lesson IV. Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the work that I do shall he do also. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do. If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever.

What wonderfully beautiful, helpful, comforting words are these which Jesus uttered in his farewell talk with his disciples! As there is time to dwell upon one thought only, let us contemplate the great truth that in Jesus Christ we see the Father. The Rev. F. W. Boreham recalls the fact that the right eye and the left eye each sees an object from its own angle, and since the camera cannot adjust itself to both eyes it effects a compromise: its single lens sees things as they would appear to one with but one eye and that in the middle of the forehead. The stereoscopic camera takes two views, as seen by both eyes. Then the two views placed behind glasses blend into one as one looks at them, just as one's eyes are accustomed automatically to do, and the resulting picture is real and vivid and life-like. "I tried, once upon a day, to think of God the Father, and to think of God the Son, and to think of God the Holy Spirit. But I became hopelessly confused, and then I heard the voice of Jesus declare that, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,' and I understood that in the Person of Jesus I have the stereoscopic view of God."

Vital Connection with Christ: Lesson V. The relation of a disciple to the Lord is that of the branches to the vine. Upon close fellowship with him depends all the graces and goodness that one possesses. "Jesus expects an impulse to arise from within and set the whole life in motion, just as the sap forces the leaf and the fruit forth into the world. He expects your connection with him to tell its story in terms of life. He expects his heart blood to go pulsing through you and make you act as the promptings of his heart caused him to act. A formal connection with a church without a vital connection with the Christ will bear no more fruit than a formal connection with the cement in the walls of the church. Tying a bunch of grapes to a lamp post does not make a vineyard. Let Christ live in you and fruit must follow. Do not be a dead branch."

Christ's Intercessory Prayer: Lesson VI. The seventeenth chapter of John admits us into the Holy of Holies of Jesus's heart. Here we hear him render to his Father an account of the way in which he had discharged the mission entrusted to him, hear him say that looking back he sees nothing left undone, nothing to regret. "It is a happy thing when, in our own degree, we finish the work which God has given us to do. We so often leave our tasks unfinished. There is about them a want of completeness and perfect grace. They lack the finish of real devotion."

Christ's earthly ministry is over; he is leaving his loved disciples in his Father's keeping. The sacred refrain of his prayer is "that they all may be one, even as we are one." "Dante, at the summit of his celestial journey, sees the saints of all centuries as the petals of a mighty rose, forming one consummate flower with God himself for center. Nothing could better express the truth of the coöperative, organic, spiritual life. It is a union which is formed by a divine life-relationship—'I in them; thou in me; one in us.'"

In Gethsemane: Lesson VII. "Jesus, full of great thoughts and emotions that had at once created the Supper and been created by it, passed with his disciples out into the cool night air. The city was asleep. They issued out of the gate that looked toward Olivet, crossed the Kedron, and were soon hidden in an olive grove. There is an awful silence in a sleeping wood, but never did the silence speak to a heart so still in its agony as the one that was then seeking in Gethsemane a place of seclusion and prayer."

The struggle, the anguish, which he there endured we may not grasp nor understand: we only know that "the Garden and the Cross give us some idea of the cost of our salvation." George Eliot has a thought for us here: "The true cross of the Redeemer was the sin and sorrow of this world—that was what lay heavy on his heart—and that is the cross we shall share with him, that is the cup we must drink of with him, if we would have any part in the divine love which is one with his sorrow."

Christ before Pilate: Lesson IX. Never was tragedy so awful nor so swift

as in the trial of Jesus Christ. And this is because the two elements of all tragedy, the Will of God and the Will of Man, are there combined and running to the same end. In most other tragedies these two are separate and even hostile. But in that tragedy the love of God and the evil will of man conspired to the same end. Hence the horror and the speed of it. Christ by silence consented to his death, the crowds shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Nothing is clearer from the Gospels than this: that it was Christ's own will to die. "I give my life," he said, "a ransom for many." All this was settled and clear before morning broke upon that Friday. That is why he was so silent before the Jewish Council and with Pilate. Why should he argue? The great argument of his life was over; the argument with God in the nighttime, in the Garden; and his heart was set past doubt or fear upon the cross. He would not say anything for his own sake to turn the undecided Pilate. For Pilate was but the instrument of the Father's will.—Dr. George Adam Smith.

The King on the Cross: Lesson X. A student asked a professor of theology how long it had taken him to understand the Atonement. The professor thought a moment and then said: "Eternity; eternity; and I won't understand it then." Well does Henry Drummond say, "We are dealing with facts; we need not be distressed if we do not understand them. God's love—how could we? God's forgiveness—how could we?"

The earthly life of Christ ended in tragedy, the poverty and shame and persecution and suffering endured culminated in a criminal's death; but it was a triumphant, glorious death, a death that was the greatest victory the world has ever known.

In an art gallery in Europe there are three pictures which portray the soul's progressive attitude toward the Crucified Christ. In the first picture, a man stands thoughtfully, questioningly, before the Christ on the cross; he does not understand the mystery, why God allowed the sinless One to be crucified. In the second picture the same man is kneeling before the cross; he has in a measure grasped Isaiah's thought: "He was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." The third picture shows the man lying at the foot of the cross: he had dedicated his life to his Redeemer's service.

The Conqueror of Death: Lesson XI. "I can imagine," said Dwight L. Moody, "when they laid our Lord in Joseph's tomb that one might have seen Death sitting over the sepulcher, saying: 'I have him; he is my Victim. He said he was the resurrection and the life. Now I hold him in my cold embrace. They thought he was never going to die: but see him now! He has had to pay tribute to me.' Never! The glorious morning comes, the Son of man bursts asunder the bands of Death, and rises from the grave a Conqueror."

The Appearances of the Risen Lord and the Ascension: Lesson XII. After his resurrection Jesus appeared to many, even to five hundred at one time, but in each case he manifested himself only to those who loved him and longed to see him. He did not appear to Pilate nor Caiaphas nor the Sanhedrin nor the rabble of Jerusalem. So is it now. He does not manifest himself to those who neglect him or are indifferent to him.

During the forty days Christ appeared to his disciples and convinced them that he was alive, so that they were able to bear witness to his resurrection. The ascension was the final event in his earthly life. "A cloud received him out of their sight": and thereafter, though not visible to the eyes of sense, he was held in the hearts of his followers.

When the disciples were terrified at his appearing, Christ bade them handle him and see that he was alive, and he is still saying to us, "Handle me and see." In the place of that form which the disciples saw, stand for us the records of those who lived with Christ on earth. Do we fail to doubt those records merely because we do not think enough about them to have any doubts? Do we believe them because we have handled them and seen that they are true?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
LIFE LESSONS FROM THE QUARTER

The Triumphal Entry: Lesson I. As Jesus approached Jerusalem on the day which we know as Palm Sunday, he sent two disciples to a village on the Mount of Olives for an ass and a colt, bidding them say to the owner, "The Lord hath need

of them." They put their garments upon the colt and Jesus rode upon it. A great crowd followed with Jesus and another crowd came out from Jerusalem to meet him. They cut down palm branches and spread them in the way, and shouted joyously as they went, "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Jesus Christ is our Lord and King. We have recognized his kingship and his claims upon us, and we have resolved to be his loyal subjects, willing and eager to follow him now and always, guided by his will in all that we do and say.

Christ's Picture of the Last Judgment: Lesson II. By a parable Jesus taught his followers that they must continue to serve him by serving others, that what they did for others was done to him. Feeding the hungry, clothing the poor, caring for the stranger and the sick and the prisoner, in short, all kind deeds are deeds done to Christ. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

We long to do something for our Lord and King, and there is never a day in our lives that we cannot serve him by doing kind deeds to others. For it is true as Whittier sings, that

Unheard, because our ears are dull,
Unseen, because our eyes are dim,
He walks our earth, the Wonderful,
And all good deeds are done to him.

The Lord's Supper: Lesson III. After Jesus and his disciples had partaken of the Passover feast he instituted the rite which we call the Lord's Supper. Taking bread he gave thanks and said, "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." And he took the cup and gave them the wine as a symbol, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you."

This do in remembrance of me. The Lord's Supper is a monument nineteen centuries old whose inscription, "In Memory of Jesus the Savior," is as legible as when first graven. By partaking of the Lord's Supper his followers in a dramatic way proclaim the Lord's death. They eat the bread and drink the cup in remembrance of him.

But what is it to remember Jesus? In the words of another, to remember Jesus is to accept him as our Mediator, to trust him as our Redeemer, to love him as our Friend, to follow him as our Teacher, to obey him as our King, to take him for our all in all. Of all this the symbolic act is a pledge.

Christ Comforts His Disciples: Lesson IV. While Jesus was with the eleven in that Upper Room he spoke to them about his departure, and they were greatly troubled. Before him loomed the shadow of the cross, and yet he who so sorely needed comfort himself, thought only of comforting his disciples, and uttered those beautiful words which have been the comfort and hope of Christians from that day to this. "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me."

Then he spoke to them about Heaven; he was but going to prepare a place for them that they might be with him. And the way they knew. "We do not even know where you are going, how can we know the way?" questioned Thomas, and when Jesus replied that he himself was the way, Philip, who had been with Jesus from the beginning of his public ministry, showed by his request, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," that he had not understood his Lord's words and did not know that Christ's life had been one continuous revelation of the Father. Is it possible that we have heard his words to as little purpose, and that he could say to us as to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me?"

Because he was leaving them he declared that they (and all true followers in whom he dwells) should continue his work with still greater results. And is it not grandly true that he whose field was the little land of Palestine now has the entire world for his province, and through his followers is doing a far greater work today?

A Lesson from the Vine: Lesson V. "Do you see that vine?" we may imagine Jesus asking his disciples; and as they answered "Yes," continuing: "Do you know that I am like that vine? Do you see those branches? Do you know that you must be like those branches? The branches are a part of the vine, and you must be a part of me. If you cut a branch off from the vine it will not live: if you drift away from me and my teaching, you can no longer bear fruit for me. I am the Vine; ye are the branches."

"I belong to him—that sense of relationship ought to make a Christian as dif-

ferent from ordinary men as a prince is different from a peasant, for it puts him at once into the rank of nobility, and makes it incumbent upon him to live as his son, not as a hired servant."

The Prayer: Lesson VI. The intercessory prayer with which Jesus closed his last long talk with his disciples has been described as "the simplest in language, the profoundest in meaning, in the whole Bible." In the opening verses, thinking of his speedy departure to the glory which he shared with God before the world was, he prayed for himself. Next he prayed for his disciples who had believed that God had sent him: "Keep them in my name, the knowledge of thee, that they may be one as we are one." Then his thought included all who were to come after, who should believe on him through the word of the disciples, "that they all may be one, even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us." And he closed his prayer with the beautiful words, "that the love whereunto thou lovest me may be in them, and I in them."

In Gethsemane: Lesson VII. When Jesus went with his eleven disciples that last Thursday night, after his talk with them in the upper room, to the Garden of Gethsemane, he wished to have three of them, Peter, James and John, nearer than the rest. He felt the need of sympathy in a time of great trial, even as we want some one to sympathize with us in our troubles. These three he bade watch with him, but their eyes were heavy, and they fell asleep. Three times Jesus came back to them, feeling the need of their sympathetic presence, and each time found them sleeping. In his tender compassion he said, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Three times he prayed that he might be saved this suffering and death, if it were his Father's will; with each uttered petition he gained strength, and out of the struggle he came calm and confident, his will at one with his Father's will. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Jesus knew the agony that was before him, and he went forth to meet it bravley, but only after he had sought help from God in prayer. In the same way shall we be able bravely to meet any trouble.

The Trial of the King: Lesson IX. Jesus was tried before the Jewish authorities and then before the Roman officials. From the arrest in Gethsemane he was led before Annas, long time high priest; then to Caiaphas, the high priest, and the Sanhedrin; and then he was taken to Pilate, the Roman governor.

Pilate knew that for envy the chief priests had accused Jesus: surely the people, who had heard him gladly, would prefer the release of Jesus to that of Barabbas (for of necessity he must release some one to them at the feast, according to custom). Pilate was greatly troubled by his own conviction of the innocence of Jesus and also by the warning of his wife, who sent to him this message, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." The priests, however, as Matthew says, seized this opportunity to persuade the people, till they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Finding that he availed not with the people, Pilate took water and washed his hands in the presence of the multitudes, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person: see ye to it." Then answered all the people, "His blood be on us and on our children." Pilate then ordered Barabbas released and Jesus delivered to their will.

Christ Died for Us: Should We not Live for Him? Lesson X. The priests and scribes and people had their way. Roman soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross between other crosses on which two thieves hung. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," he cried. The soldiers and the priests and the one thief mocked him. The other thief sought his forgiveness and did not seek in vain. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," the Savior cried as the end came.

Christ died for us. What effect must this fact have upon our lives? A British preacher tells a story which illustrates the lesson. In the old days before gunpowder was invented an enemy came in the darkness and surrounded a lonely garrison. The soldiers must get word of their plight to friends, and their only means of doing this was by lighting the cresset fire which hung by its chain high up where the enemy would see the man who tried to kindle it, and would shoot him down at the first spark he made. One man offered to fire the beacon, well knowing what his offer meant. He kneeled and prayed, and then sprang to his feet, grasped the torch, leaped on the ramparts, and climbed to the beacon, while a shower of arrows came whizzing upon him. But the beacon was fired: its flame shot up, their friends understood and marched to the rescue and drove the enemy back. Was there a

soldier of them all that night who did not love and honor the man who had saved them by his death? And Christ died for us—died for you, died for me, died for everybody. Should we not love him? Should we not live for him?

Christ Lives, and We Shall Live also: Lesson XI.

God claimed his Son that Easter morn—
The Son whom he had lent;
The Son whom he had spared awhile
On Love's great mission sent.
God claimed his Son—"Go, angel, go,
And roll the stone away!"
Swifter than lightning's flash he sped
Ere yet had dawned the day.

"Return!" God said, and through the vault
The Voice majestic pealed.
In vain the guard! One mighty form
Sat on the stone they sealed.
God claimed his Son, dispersed his foes,
Crowned his own glory's throne:—
And as he claimed his Son that day,
He will claim all his own.—Wm. Luff.

Death is coming to each one of us and we dread it. And yet Jesus has taken away the terror of the grave. He has declared that he is the Resurrection and the Life, and because he lives we shall live also. Ought we not, then, to live well our life here and to look forward happily to that future life to which we are going?

The Forty Days and the Ascension: Lesson XII. Christ had to convince his followers of his resurrection, for they were to be the witnesses through whom the whole world was eventually to know of the life and death and resurrection and power of the living Savior. He must give them the means of satisfying themselves as to the truth of the good news brought by Mary and Peter and John. This he did, convincing them that he was alive, by appearing suddenly before them and talking with them, giving them the opportunity of touching him; telling them that "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having." They were to wait in Jerusalem till they had received power from on high, and then they were to go forth and preach in his name. After forty days Jesus Christ parted from them, ascending to heaven, and they rejoiced, believing as do we that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea, and for ever.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

For Young People and Adults. 1. What purpose did the Triumphal Entry serve? 2. What did Jesus teach in regard to practical Christianity? 3. What is the meaning of our Communion service? 4. What did Jesus teach about the relation of his followers to himself in his words about the Vine and the Branches? 5. Repeat many of Christ's words in his last discourse to his disciples. 6. Give the events of Thursday evening and night. 7. In what respects is Judas's betrayal more despicable than Pilate's sentence? 8. What was the accusation against Jesus in the Jewish trials: in the Roman: what was the real reason for the condemnation by the Jews: by Pilate? 9. What are the proofs of the resurrection of Christ? 10. Why was the ascension necessary?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. How many days of Christ's life do these lessons cover? 2. What did Jesus tell his disciples about Heaven? 3. About the way to know God? 4. About how to "bear fruit"? 5. What was his prayer in Gethsemane? On the cross? 6. Why and how did the Jews bring about his death? 7. Why did he die? 8. What did Peter and John see at the tomb, and of what did it convince them? 9. What did Jesus tell us to do in remembrance of him? 10. How can we serve him, as he himself has told us?

QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults. 1. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? 2. What part does your belief play in your life?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. What does the word *Pentecost* mean? 2. What happened at the Pentecost which followed Christ's resurrection? 3. What does "pricked in their heart," verse 37, mean?

THORWALDSEN'S STATUES

JAMES JOHN PETER

SECOND QUARTER

THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND THE EPISTLES

(First Quarter of a Nine Months' Course)

LESSON I—APRIL 5

THE BLESSING OF PENTECOST

GOLDEN TEXT: Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2.38

LESSON Acts 2 DEVOTIONAL READING Joel 2.28-32

ACTS 2.36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.

37 Now when they heard *this,* they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? 38 And Peter *said* unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. 40 And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. 41 They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. 46 And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE EFFECT UPON THE OBSERVERS, verses 1-13. Before he left his disciples, Jesus gave them a great

PETER PREACHING AT PENTECOST

From a Painting by D. Mastroianni

commission. They were to convince others that he is the Son of God, that he lived and taught as only they could fully testify, that he willingly suffered death on the cross for the salvation of the world, and that he had arisen from the dead and ascended into heaven. "Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection" was a truth which the world would not readily accept. Only through power given them from on high could these men accomplish their great task.

On the Day of Pentecost that power came. There was a sound as of wind and there was an appearance as of fire—symbols of the Holy Spirit. The disciples found themselves praising God in words that sounded strange to themselves and incomprehensible to others, but the important, never-to-be-forgotten fact was that they then realized that the Spirit of God which had been in Christ had come into their hearts also, that he was to abide with them as their Strengthener and Helper, that he it was who through them would make the Christ known to the ends of the world.

"I saw a car wheel recently that had been running many miles with the brake clamped tight against it. It was white hot and it glowed with heat and light until it seemed almost transparent in its extraordinary luminosity. Those Christians in the upper room at Pentecost were baptized with fire so that the whole personality of each of them was glowing with heat and light, for the fire had gone all through them. They suddenly became conscious that their divine Leader who was no longer visible with them had become an invisible presence and a living Power working through them" (Dr. Rufus M. Jones).

II. PETER'S SERMON AT PENTECOST, verses 14-36. The Spirit's power has changed Peter from the cowardly denier of his Lord into a fearless defender who no longer gives a thought to his own safety, but thinks only of his Lord and his Lord's work.

Peter is speaking to Jews, and his object is to prove to them that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies and expectations in regard to the Messiah. The events which so amazed them (verses 1-13), were but the fulfillment, he tells them, of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2.28-32), that at the coming of the Messiah God's Spirit would be poured forth, and old and young, men and women, bond and free, would see visions and speak divine truths. Then he takes up his great theme that Jesus is the Christ, and gives three proofs. First, Jesus had wrought many wonders of which they themselves were witnesses. Second, he had been crucified and slain, all in accord with God's high purpose, for death could not hold him, God had raised him from the dead to higher life and wider power. Of the fact of the resurrection he and all the apostles are witnesses, and, furthermore, the resurrection and exaltation fulfilled two prophecies of the Psalms and thus proved Jesus the Messiah. Third, this coming of the Holy Spirit, at the manifestation of whose power they are all amazed, confirms the truth that Jesus lives and cares for his followers, for he has sent his Spirit.

Our printed text begins with the climax of Peter's sermon: "Know assuredly," he cried, "that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, both sovereign and Messiah, this Jesus whom ye crucified."

III. THE EFFECT OF THE SERMON, verses 37-41. Peter's words, especially the appeal to prophecy, were convincing to his hearers, and the thrust at their consciences pierced their hearts; they were "convicted of sin," as we say, and they asked, "Brethren, what shall we do?"—What can we do about our guilt, how can we be freed from it?

Peter replied, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." See Lk. 24.47; Mt. 28.18, 19. "In getting the exact meaning of Peter's directions to these inquiries, observe, (1) *Repent* is literally *to perceive afterwards,* and hence *to change the mind,* including one's view of life and truth, and hence one's purpose. Here it includes the entire change of opinion respecting Jesus Christ, from regarding him as an impostor to reverencing him as both Lord and Christ; but it also includes all that change of interior life and purpose which is consequent thereon. (2) *Be baptized* follows in order the direction to repent. Baptism is not a regenerating experience, but a sign and symbol of repentance and a public confession of Christ. (3) *In the name of Jesus Christ,* with an acknowledgment of him as the sinner's only hope, his Redeemer, Justifier, Lord, final Judge. (4) *For the remission of sins* is for the putting away of sins, the entire cleansing of the heart from actual sin, as well as the pardon of those that are past" (Dr. Lyman Abbott). Dr. Jowett explains Peter's directions in this way:—

"First there is repentance. And repentance is not a flow of emotion, but a certain direction of mind. I may repent with dry eyes. It is not a matter of feeling, but of the willing. It is to lay hold of the aimless, drifting thought, and steer it toward God! It is a change of mind. Second, there is a definite and avowed choice of my new Goal, my new Lord and King. The Christian life cannot be a subterfuge. It cannot be lived incognito. There must be confession, a bold and clarion-like avowal that henceforth I am a soldier of the Lord. And the spiritual experiences will be sure, as sure as the law-governed processes of the material world. There will be remission of sins. The old guilt will fall away from my soul as the chains fell from Peter's limbs when the angel touched them. And there will be the gift of the Holy Spirit. A new dynamic is mine! I enter into fellowship with the power of the ascended Lord."

"For to you is the promise, and to your children," continued Peter; "and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him." Peter may refer here to the Jews who were scattered abroad, or to the Gentiles—for it is an expression often used for Gentiles in both the Old and the New Testaments. If the latter is meant, Peter at this time, of course, thought of the promise as being to the Gentiles only in case they became Jewish proselytes.

And with many other words Peter exhorted his hearers to save themselves from sharing in the guilt and penalty of this perverse (crooked) generation. About three thousand people accepted Peter's words as true and were baptized.

It has been pointed out that "that day," according to Biblical usage, need not necessarily mean the day of Pentecost, but may mean "that period," the first epoch in the life of the Church. This interpretation may have been adopted on account of the seeming impossibility of three thousand persons having been baptized in one day in Jerusalem, where water was not abundant. There were numerous pools encircling the city, however (some of them still in use), and the habits of the East would not prevent these public reservoirs being used for this purpose.

It was Andrew who found Peter and led him to Christ. At Pentecost Peter led three thousand to the Savior. As some one has said, if Peter was the spiritual father of all those converts certainly Andrew was their spiritual grandfather. You can never know what will be the result of your faithful work for the Master. Dwight L. Moody emphasized this thought by a figure: "Away up the mountain side there is a little spring; by and by it becomes a rivulet. Other rivulets run into it. Before long it is a large brook, and then it becomes a broad river sweeping onward to the sea. On its banks are cities, towns and villages, where many thousands live. Vegetation flourishes on every side, and commerce is carried down its stately bosom to distant lands. So if you turn one to Christ, that one may turn a hundred; the hundred may turn a thousand; and so the stream, small at first, goes on broadening and deepening as it rolls toward eternity."

IV. LIFE IN THE EARLY CHURCH, verses 42-47. All these new converts became members of the Christian community, and were steadfast in their attention to the teaching of the apostles, lived with wonderful unity and comradeship with the rest, and shared in the breaking of bread and in the public prayers. The "breaking of bread" refers to the blessing which was uttered at the beginning of a meal when the bread, which was in the form of thin flat cakes, was solemnly broken for distribution.

It must not be forgotten that no part of the New Testament was written at this time. The apostles taught from memory the lessons of Christ's life and words. "Here we see the Church, as Luke saw it in his mind's eye, in the days of its splendid prime, when the memory of Jesus was vivid and the gift of the Spirit new."

"This is ever the issue of the true outpouring of the Spirit: sundered peoples become one. At low-tide there are multitudes of separated pools along the shore: at high tide they flow together, and the little distinctions are lost in a splendid union. It is so ecclesiastically. Our sectarianisms are always most frowning and obtrusive when spiritually we are 'at low tide.' When the tide rises, it is amazing how the ramparts are submerged. It is not round-table conferences that we need, but seasons of communion when together we shall await the outpouring of the Holy Spirit" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson. What did the disciples do after the ascension of Christ? What had Christ told them they should do after they received the power of the Holy Spirit? Who is the Holy Spirit? What had Jesus said to his disciples about their doing greater miracles than he did?

Waiting for the Spirit's Coming. When Christ was about to be parted from them, even at the last moment of intercourse with him, the disciples asked, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" And patiently he replied, "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." "They were looking for the reordering of circumstances; he was looking for the transformation of character. They wanted to make a broken people into a kingdom; he was waiting to make individual men into kings. 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom?' 'Ye shall become kings, when the Holy Spirit is upon you.'"

And Christ bade them wait in Jerusalem for the Spirit's coming "not many days hence," whose coming should fit them to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

While waiting they chose Matthias to take the place of Judas in their company of twelve. Ten days after Christ's ascension, fifty days after the crucifixion (the word *Pentecost* means the *fiftieth day feast*, so called because observed fifty days after the third day of the Passover season, Lev. 23.15), the twelve disciples and others were assembled in the "upper room" of the house where they were wont to meet. The traditional room on Mount Zion is reached by an outside stairway and is large enough to hold the "multitude" mentioned in Acts 1.15. The crowd that arrived (verse 6) probably assembled in the courtyard of the house, and there Peter delivered his sermon. The year of the crucifixion and therefore of the founding of the Christian Church is generally given as 29 A. D.

The Book of the Acts. The Acts of the Apostles gives the evidence of the continued power of the Risen Christ in and through his disciples. See page 22 of our Introduction.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

A teacher can make this a difficult, mystical lesson of no directly practical value to his scholars, or he can clarify his scholars' thoughts about the Holy Spirit and his work, and make the lesson one of great helpfulness for Christian living. The teaching should correspond to the truth thus tersely stated by Dr. George Hodges:

"There is one God, one only God who reveals himself to us, and deals with us in three ways so different that we call him by three different names. When we think of God as the Maker and Maintainer of the universe, according to whose power all things have their being, we are thinking of him as the Father. When we think of God as manifesting himself to us in the life of Christ, we are thinking still of the same one God, but as the Son. When we think of God as revealing his will in our conscience, and thereby teaching us how to do better, and at the same time to attain the betterment which is thus revealed, we are thinking again of the same God, whom we called first Father and then Son, and whom we now call the Holy Spirit."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH

Beginning the Lesson. The writer of the Book of The Acts was also the writer of the Gospel according to Luke, and he begins his second volume thus (Moffatt's translation): In my former volume, Theophilus, I treated all that Jesus began by doing and teaching down to the day when, after issuing the orders by the Holy Spirit to the disciples whom he had chosen, he was taken up to heaven. After his sufferings he had shown them that he was alive by a number of proofs, revealing himself to them for forty days and discussing the affairs of God's Realm. Also, as he ate with them, he charged them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised—"for what you have heard me speak of," said he; "for John baptized with water, but not many days after this you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. . . . You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you."

This Book which we are to study for nine months is a sequel to the Gospels. The men of the Gospels re-appear in The Acts—the same men, yet utterly changed

in character, in aim, in force, in spirit. The Acts is a record of transformed characters.

Continue with the Historical Background and Text Explained.

Pentecost a Time of Enhanced Power. A careful reading of the story of Pentecost and of the life of the primitive church must convince anyone that those who received the Holy Spirit were intensely conscious of a changed outlook upon life and gained immensely in power. This new factor in their lives, Evelyn Underhill reminds us, is sometimes called re-birth, sometimes grace, sometimes the power of the Spirit. "We misread history if we regard it either as a mere gust of emotional fervor, or a theological idea, or if we discount the 'miracles of healing' and other proofs of enhanced power by which it was expressed. Everything goes to prove that 'the more abundant life' offered by Christ to his followers was literally experienced by them; and was the source of their joy, their enthusiasm, their mutual love and power of endurance."

A Model Church. I remember reading some time ago a sermon by Dr. David James Burrell based upon our text, and the points he made were these:

(1) It was a Christian Church; that is, Christ was the vital center of it; (2) it was an orthodox church; for it is written: "They gladly received his word, and continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine." (3) It was a praying church; they continued stedfastly in prayer. (4) It was a practising church: the faith which the disciples professed in their creed and in their prayers was translated into the terms of daily life, else it would never have been written that "they had favor with all the people." (5) It was a fraternal church; so much so that "they had all things common"; (6) this church kept open house; so that others were "added to it daily": there was welcome and a glad hand for all; (7) it was a church where signs and wonders were wrought: the miracle of Pentecost had just occurred.

Continuing Stedfastly in Fellowship. Our word *fellowship* is rich in suggestiveness. Its simplest meaning is *companionship*, and *companion*, you know, comes from two Latin words *Con*, with, together, and *panis*, bread: so that literally a companion is one with whom we eat bread. Thus it is a fitting word to apply to church associates, those who eat together the bread of the Lord's Table. Fellowship means association, communion, joint interests and experiences, and, yes, joint purposes, responsibilities, and duties. It is a condition of being sharers in whatever befalls, of having all things in common. "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another," declares the apostle John. The basis of Christian fellowship is the common relationship that all Christians bear to their Lord.

Jean Kenyon Mackenzie, whose accounts of African life are most interesting, records the conversation which she overheard one day among her four hammock carriers, who came from four different tribes. "This walking we walk today," they told each other, "is a strange walking for black people to walk. Four men of four tribes walking in one company and doing one work. God alone could unite us after this fashion. Before the time of the things of God, not one of us but would have feared to meet the other. And now we eat together and sleep together like people of one village."

When the Spirit Comes. We must not set too great a distance between that day and this, nor make too great a difference between what happened then and what is always happening in the experience of men. The great wind does not blow, nor does the fire descend upon our heads, nor do we speak with other tongues, today. But these, we must remember, were but symbols. The great event of that memorable Pentecost was not the blowing of a wind, nor the burning of a fire, but the entrance of the Spirit of God into the souls of men. And that benediction did not end at Pentecost, nor did it begin then.

For think of what is really meant when it is said that the Spirit came. Remember that there is only one God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are not three Gods, but rather three names of God, describing three distinctions in the nature of God. And when we speak of the Holy Spirit what we have in mind is this: that God who made us, and is the Father, and who revealed himself among us in Jesus Christ, and is the Son, speaks also in our hearts, admonishes us in the voice of conscience, puts into our hearts good desires, stirs us up to worthy deeds, teaches us more and more of the truth. That is what Jesus said: "He will guide you into all truth." And whenever we are guided into truth, into any kind of truth, so that suddenly we catch a new vision of God, or discern a new duty or a new

opportunity, and we long to do better and to be better than we have ever been before, then the Spirit of God has come to us as truly as he ever came to Peter or to Paul, and that common day is made a Pentecost.—Dean George Hodges, in The Battles of Peace.

The Invisible Forces of the Spirit Are as Real as Ever. When the Hellgate bridge was being built over the East River in New York, the engineers came upon an old derelict ship, lying imbedded in the river mud, just where one of the central pieces of the bridge was to go down through to its bedrock foundation. No tug boat could be found that was able to start the derelict from its ancient bed in the ooze. Finally, with a sudden inspiration one of the workers hit upon this scheme. He took a large flat-boat, which had been used to bring stone down the river, and he chained it to the old sunken ship when the tide was low. Then he waited for the great tidal energies to do their work. Slowly the rising tide, with all the forces of the ocean behind it, came up under the flat-boat, raising it inch by inch. And as it came up, lifted by irresistible power, the derelict came up with it, until it was entirely out of the mud that held it.

There are greater forces than those tidal energies waiting for us to use for our tasks. They operate when we lay hold on them.—Dr. Rufus Jones, in The World Within.

For Discussion. 1. The progress of the work of translating the Bible so that every man may read it in his own tongue.

2 The doctrine of Apostolic Succession. The apostles, it is asserted, ordained men to continue their office in the Church, and they in turn ordained others in an unbroken line reaching to our own time. "It is this official continuation of the ministry," it is further asserted, "on which the apostolic and therefore the Christian character of the Church depends." About this Dr. James Denney says, "If it could be proved, it would be quite irrelevant of the work of the true church. Such an external, legal, formal continuity, even if it existed, could guarantee nothing spiritual. The connection with the apostles which marks the Church as Christ's is to be sought in fidelity to apostolic teaching."

Questions to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Whose was the faith to which Peter refers in verse 16? 2. What has religion and philanthropy in common? 3. Have you ever received help that was better than money? 4. Do you give such help often? 5. What is the proper observance of Easter?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE STORY OF PENTECOST

Beginning the Lesson. Next Sunday is what day? What does Easter commemorate? How long after Christ's resurrection was Pentecost? Fifty days from next Sunday it will be May thirty-first. On that day we shall have a lesson from The Acts, that great missionary book which we are to study for nine consecutive months, but our Lesson Committee gives an alternative text for that day, entitling it "Whitsuntide Lesson."

Probably you have not before heard that word. In many parts of England there are a few holidays at Whitsuntide. It is a time when the sun shines brightly over there, and the fields are gay with flowers, so the boys and girls put on new clothes. The quick change from the dull garments of winter to the pretty colors of summer has been likened to the butterfly coming suddenly out of the somber chrysalis in which it has spent so many of the gloomy months. But why is the day called Whitsuntide? *Whitsun* means *White Sunday*. In olden days it was White Sunday-time, when all who recently became Christians went to church in white clothes.

The beginning of Whitsuntide we study today, when the Pentecostal blessing came upon the people assembled in that upper room at Jerusalem fifty days after Christ's resurrection, ten days after his ascension. On that day the Spirit of God came with power to a group of men and women who had been praying. Who will tell the story of Pentecost?

The Holy Spirit is the Influence of God. The sun itself is too bright for us to look at, but we like to feel the warmth of its beams. Even if we had our eyes shut we should know that the sun was shining, because we should feel its warmth. The sun is far away, millions of miles from the earth, but we feel its influence. Something comes from the sun to us which makes us warm; something comes from the sun to seeds and plants which draws them out of the earth and makes them bud and blossom. It is the influence of the sun.

If there were a sweet rose in a vase beside you, you would know that it was there, even if you shut your eyes. By its fragrance you may know and recognize it even with closed eyes. It is the influence of the rose.

There are many rivers which turn wheels, work mills, give the power for electric light, cleanse and refresh everything they touch. We do not see all the river at once, only a little bit of it. But we know that there is more of it than we can see, because of the work which it does. We know that the power to do all this work must come from somewhere, and just as the sunshine is a part of the sun itself, and as the fragrance is a part of the rose, so the flowing river which we see is a part of the great river which we do not see.

So the Holy Spirit is the influence of God. He comes from God and yet is one with God himself, as the sunshine is one with the sun, and the fragrance is one with the flower, and the flowing river is one with the great river.

When we see a boy or a girl with a heart full of love and generosity and unselfishness—so full that it flows over with kind words and deeds—when we see that strong, gentle influence leading him or her to do right, we know that God's Holy Spirit—God's holy influence—is in the heart of that boy or girl. Though we cannot see or touch him, we can feel and recognize the Spirit's love and sweetness and power. And when we feel a desire to do the right, a wish to do a kind act, or to say a kind word, we may know that it is God's Holy Spirit in our heart which is prompting this. That is his work—the mission of the Holy Spirit—to send joy and love and goodness into every heart, and make it like the Heart of God.—Condensed from an article in The Sunday School Chronicle, by Grace Winter.

When Power Comes. It was in a Christian Endeavor meeting that he made the great discovery. As is generally known, each Endeavorer pledges himself "to take some part, aside from singing, in every Christian Endeavor prayer meeting, unless hindered by some reason which I can conscientiously give to my Lord and Master"—a pledge that has been of incalculable value to the Christian church. He made his discovery the evening on which he was to make his first attempt to fulfill his pledge.

He was afraid. He was just a boy fifteen years old, but he was already deeply conscious of a call to the ministry. He longed to rise and do his part, but he trembled at the thought of it. The Endeavorers with whom he met had a high standard of attainment; the speeches were thoughtful, the prayers had a fine, devotional atmosphere. He did not think that he could do so well as the others.

He decided that he would try first to take part in prayer. He did not believe in actually composing a prayer beforehand, but he tried carefully and conscientiously to prepare his mind, for he was sure that the inspiration that he hoped for would most surely come to a mind and heart ready to receive it.

It worried him to feel so nervous. "Surely," he thought, "since I have prayed for strength, I should have it now; yet I feel as weak as water." The moment drew nearer and nearer, yet he felt no fitter for the ordeal; if anything, he grew more agitated.

"I am not strong enough for it," he said to himself, "and yet I have prayed for strength to do my duty and fulfil my pledge. Why has not God answered my prayer?" Then suddenly a thought flashed into his mind like a ray of light and illuminated his problem. "How do I know, until I try, that God has not given me strength? It is not for the time of waiting but for the action that I have asked his help. I will find out by trying."

The great moment had come. He, the beginner, was on his feet, and it was as if some secret door in his soul had opened, through which poured a flood of prayer. It was not a long prayer; it was simple, perhaps here and there it was crude; but it had a burning sincerity that everyone felt. So it was that this youth, who has since become a most effective minister of Christ, learned one of the greatest lessons of life—that God's power comes when faith is perfected in action. "Faith without works is dead."—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.—Jesus.

Christ is with us himself, that is, he is with us by his Spirit.—Henry Drummond.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What had Jesus promised his disciples that they should do in his name, as recorded in Mk. 16.17? 2. What is a better gift than alms for cripples today? 3. What blessings can you name which are more valuable than money? 4. Which of these blessings can you give to others? 5. What did Peter say about the resurrection of Jesus in his talk to the people after the cure of the lame man?

THE CRIPPLE AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE

GOLDEN TEXT: I am Jehovah that healeth thee. Exodus 15.26

LESSON Acts 3 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 35.3-10

ACTS 3 Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*. 2 And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. 4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. 8 And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God: 10 and they took knowledge of him, that it was he that sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

The Easter Lesson assigned for today is 1 Corinthians 15.12-20, and the topics are: Some Meanings of Christ's Resurrection (for Young People and Adults), and The Benefits of Christ's Resurrection (for Intermediates and Seniors). As only a month has intervened since our lesson upon John's account of the resurrection of Christ, I have treated here the regular lesson from The Acts. There is, moreover, a good text for an Easter lesson in this regular lesson, and to those who prefer the Easter discussion I would suggest that they base it upon Peter's words in his discourse to the people following the cure of the lame man and upon his words in his trial before the Sanhedrin, Acts 3.15; 4.2, 10-12, and that they find material for their discussion in our lesson of March 15th.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE REQUEST OF THE CRIPPLE, verses 1-4. In the days which we are studying there were no clocks like ours to measure time. Whether the Jews used sun dials, or water clocks, or some other contrivance, we do not know. They divided the day between sunrise and sunset into twelve equal parts, and of course the length of each part, or hour, varied, being longer in summer than in winter.

Nine in the morning and three in the afternoon were the two hours fixed by law for sacrifice and prayers, Ex. 29.41. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, the ninth hour, as Peter and John were about to enter the temple enclosure for prayer, that they came upon a cripple sitting on the steps begging. Visitors to Palestine will have no difficulty in visualizing this scene. The lame and the blind, the poor and the diseased, are sitting around every church door soliciting alms. The blind are led and the lame are sometimes literally carried on the shoulders of obliging friends to their accustomed place. Whether the beggars are impostors or not, few pass them by without giving them a copper piece of the value of half a cent. On Friday afternoons the steps leading down to the Jews' Wailing Place at Jerusalem are so occupied by beggars of all sorts and descriptions that one makes his way through them with difficulty.

This beggar whom Peter saw was about forty years old (Acts 4.22), and had been a cripple from birth. He was carried daily to the Beautiful Gate to beg, that gate of the temple through which no cripple nor deformed person might pass into the temple area.

"Only within the recollection of living men and women have we come to think of the Gate Beautiful as one thrown open to our spirits by the loving hand of God. We are not afraid of Art. If for our church blessings we erect places other than the best, it is our poverty and not our will consents, the feeling that with the world's work waiting to be done and with our resources limited, first things come first. We would glory in the noblest forms of architecture which human genius could raise on high. Today we would make our forms of worship stately, rich, harmonious, the highest that is in us seeking the Most High. The Gate by which we enter his temple should be called Beautiful" (Dr. Charles F. Aked).

II. THE GIFT RECEIVED BY THE CRIPPLE, verses 5-8. Everyone must have known this cripple well. He was "part of their city landscape," as someone has said; they knew him as they knew the carved columns of the temple doorway. He did not expect to receive alms from every worshiper, and probably he glanced indifferently at the two apostles till Peter said, "Look on us." "Silver and gold have I none"—thus Peter began.

He is truly poor who can say, "Only silver and gold have I."

"But," Peter continued, "what I have, that give I thee: in the name—in the power—of Jesus of Nazareth, walk." Jesus had promised that his disciples should do wonderful works in his name, Mt. 16.17. "Was this some new-discovered quality and power in themselves?" Phillips Brooks questions, and then he thinks of the disciples as saying: "This has come to us since we had to do with Jesus. It is since we were his disciples that this new power began to stir within us." And then they must have said: "It is the same which stirred in him. He, too, was full of pity, and loved life, and counted the loss or the defeat of life a woe, and tried to give of his own life to others." And then they came back to themselves and all was clear. All this was in them because they belonged to him. This desire and power to heal was his, not theirs. He was the spring and fountain out of which the divine water flowed. They were only the channels down which it flowed to its result.

"Before perfect soundness can be imparted to any bruised, lame, or helpless soul, there must be the energy of the Divine, which resides in Jesus, and the receptivity of the human, which is the necessary condition in us" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

With wonderful faith in Christ's power, Peter then took the man by the right hand and raised him up.

"There are men who have ceased to believe in the Bible and in all existing religious organizations, but no one has yet been found who does not believe in a strong and uplifting hand. We shall have a new Book of the Acts when the Church goes back to the Gate Beautiful and gets a fresh glimpse of the gospel as preached by the apostolic band" (Dr. C. E. Jefferson).

Immediately the man's feet and ankle-bones received strength. (The interesting fact has been noticed that the Greek words for *ankle-bones* are those which only a physician would use, and Luke the author of The Acts was a physician.) The cripple who had never walked in his life leaped up, stood a moment, began to walk, and then in joy and gratitude went with Peter and John, leaping and praising God.

"The Beautiful Gate means, for us, the hour of opportunity that lies close to the hour of prayer. What do I mean by that? I mean that those who enter into this experience of prayer will find lying all along the pathway of life occasions for service and powers for service which but for their experience in prayer they would neither have seen nor have been able to see. I believe that prayer not only keeps alive in us but keeps in working power influences which do not continue unless we continue in prayer. The discontinuance of prayer means to rob life of power" (Dr. C. C. Hall).

III. THE EFFECT UPON THE PEOPLE OF THE CURE OF THE CRIPPLE, verses 9-11. Probably they all entered the Court of the Women and engaged in worship, and then came back together into the Outer Court, the Court of the Gentiles. When the people saw this man walking and leaping they gathered around him and the apostles in Solomon's Porch, and gazed upon them in great amazement. Peter quickly disclaimed all power of his own in the cure.

"God's work can only be done in and by God's strength; therefore, work well done will not be our work, but God working in us" (Andrew Murray).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How many followers had Jesus at his death? How many were added at Pentecost? What miracles had Peter and John seen Jesus work?

The Result of the Cure of the Cripple. Some months had passed—how many we do not know—since the events of Pentecost. Many wonders were wrought by the apostles. This cure of the cripple Luke narrates because of its far-reaching effects, for it and Peter's sermon which followed aroused the first opposition of the Jewish authorities.

It was faith in Jesus Christ Peter told the people, that had made the man strong and sound, this Christ whom the God of their fathers had glorified by proving his power in this sign; whom they had delivered up to Pilate; the Holy and Righteous One whom they had refused to have freed as Pilate himself had wished, and had demanded in his stead a murderer; this Prince of Life whom they had killed but whom God had raised from the dead, as his disciples could testify.

While Peter boldly accused the people as well as their rulers of the death of Christ, he added that they had been ignorant. God had fulfilled his will, that Christ should suffer, even as their prophets had foreshadowed. Therefore let them repent of their guilt and turn to Jesus, that their sins might be blotted out and the Messianic Kingdom be realized, as all the prophets had foretold.

Many believed Peter's words, and the number of Christ's followers grew to five thousand.

This teaching concerning the resurrection of Jesus did not please the priests and the Sadducees; they put Peter and John in prison for the night, and the next day had them brought before the Sanhedrin. "By what power, or in what name, have ye done this?" they asked. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole," boldly Peter answered. "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."

They marveled that, "unlearned and ignorant men" as they were, these apostles could speak thus boldly and well, and "they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." After a conference among themselves in which they acknowledged that they could not minimize the miracle because the man that was healed was standing there, they returned and charged the apostles not to speak nor teach in the name of Jesus.

"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye" were the words that Peter boldly uttered; "for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Scene of the Lesson. It is the temple enclosure. The word *temple,* you know, was applied to the whole temple area with its various courts which rose terrace upon terrace—first the Court of the Gentiles, next the Court of the Women, then the Court of the Israelites, and lastly the Court of the Priests within which was the sanctuary itself. The Court of the Women (so called because women as well as men might enter) was the usual place for the worshipers, and it was always thronged at the hours of prayer.

The Mosque of Omar which Occupies the Site of the Temple

The location of the Beautiful Gate is not definitely known. Some scholars think that it led from the city into the first Court. The majority believe it to have been the gate facing the Mount of Olives, between the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Women, called the Gate of Nicanor. It was of beautiful Corinthian brass, fashioned after the semblance of a vine, and like gold it shone in the morning sun. Around the inside of the outer walls of this Court of the Gentiles were porches, open only toward the Court. They were paved with marble, and their flat roofs of cedar were supported by marble columns. Solomon's Porch was on the east, and was six hundred feet long by seventy-five feet wide. It was called "Solomon's," not because it was the very one erected by Solomon, but because it was built on the great wall which Solomon had raised from the valley below, and retained the name of the porch which it replaced. Its double rows of Corinthian pillars were supposed to have survived from Solomon's temple.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Many a Sunday School scholar sits before his teacher as listlessly as that cripple sat at the Beautiful Gate. Some of them are listless because they have grown accustomed to the prospect of not receiving anything worth while during the lesson period, just as the cripple was listless because he was not expecting much from Peter and John. The attitude of listless scholars may be as completely changed as that of the cripple, who became at once an alert, eager expectant man.

What gifts have you for your pupils that are far more valuable than money? What wealth of mind and heart, of knowledge and insight, of interest and love, have you in store for them? You have great gifts; may you be prodigal in your use of them.

In teaching this lesson, aim to turn your pupils' thoughts, desires and purposes upon their own opportunities for helpfulness.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY TO BODY AND SOUL

Beginning the Lesson. We need spend no time over the story of our lesson, so familiar is it to us all. Mr. George Jackson's imagination has played around the scene, and he suggests that others might have met the case in the following ways:—

Here comes one hopeless, sad-eyed and muttering scraps of science: "In the name of the survival of the fittest, thou art damned. Weak thou art, and to the wall thou shalt go." And this is Mr. Rigidly Righteous, with knitted brow and stern lips: "Who shall pity thee? Thy sin hath brought thee here. Evil hast thou done, and the penalty must thou pay." Here, too, comes Miss Philanthropy, with her good-natured smile and easy ways: "Silver and gold will I give thee; another crutch better and stronger, for thee to hobble along with." And there is another, who, with his little load of petty maxims, might have dwelt in Bunyan's village of Morality: "In the name of morality, in the name of Social Respectability, in thy own name stand upon thy feet, walk, be good."

What is wrong about Miss Philanthropy's help?

Helping Cripples to Help Themselves. As the maimed soldiers were discharged from the hospitals after the Great War, the world asked, "what can be done to utilize such men?" Formerly a government bestowed a pension and possibly a medal upon the maimed. The medal and pension were quite inadequate as a means of support, and the pensioner was more or less dependent upon relations or was forced to seek modest employment as watchman or street-vendor. Now governments have a sense of responsibility for those maimed in the service of their country. The desire and purpose have come to be, not merely to ameliorate their sufferings or privations, but to "make the maimed whole."

The whole problem has been worked out scientifically. First, there has been the work of surgical reconstruction. New arms, new legs and various other mechanical contrivances have been supplied. Then a psychological side received attention. Discouragement had to be overcome, ambition aroused. This is what has been said to the crippled: "If you will yourself help to the best of your ability, we will so train you that your handicap will not prove a serious disadvantage; we will prepare you for a job at which you can earn as much as in your previous position." And then in trade-schools and schools of all sorts, through "re-education" the man has been enabled to hold his place in his own right, by his own ability.

"I have both arms off, my right arm is taken off at the shoulder joint, and of the left arm I have only a three-inch stump. But I am farming one hundred and eighty acres, plowing corn with a riding cultivator, hauling everything, driving the binder when cutting oats, the mower when cutting hay, driving a car and cranking it with my feet." Does not that seem as marvelous as the walking and leaping of the cripple at the Gate Beautiful?

Signs and Wonders Wrought by Modern Missionaries. Medical missionaries today do not perform miracles and heal instantaneously. The slow processes of the scientific method had supplanted the swiftness of such a cure as our lesson narrates, but they perform many gradual cures that seem no less miraculous to the people.

And there are other signs and wonders that follow the missionary today which are just as much evidence of a divine presence and of divine forces at work with him as those seen by the early Church. "When we hear of some bitter Moslem turning to worship the Son of God, or some proud Brahmin counting all things lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, or some poor pagan cleansed from

loathsome vice and superstition, are we not face to face with facts which are just as truly 'signs and wonders' as those which were wrought in Apostolic times?"

The Healing Ministry of the Church. Physicians are agreed that a very large percentage of our bodily ills would be avoided if we were at peace spiritually. Faith vitally affects both body and mind. Faith in God will do all and far more than Coué and all other mental healers have ever offered. Has not the church a work here? Dr. Samuel McComb believes it has. He reminds us that our churches are haunted by great numbers of unhappy people, depressed, neurasthenic, the prey to remorse, and these people think that religion could save them, if they only knew how to utilize its forces. It is from these mainly that the various cults of our time obtain their recruits. "Has the Church nothing to say to them?" Dr. McComb questions. "How can we continue to read the stories of Christ's healing ministry as we find them in the Gospels without feeling that here is something vital to Christianity and its work in the world? If Christ before death was a great healing Spirit, must he not continue to be a great healing Spirit after death? The limits of spiritual healing we cannot define, but that the weaker self, the self cursed by remorse, fear, worry, indecision, and other debilitating states, can be reborn into a larger self, characterized by freedom, unity and peace, through faith in a power able and willing to help, is indisputable. My belief is that before many decades shall have passed every church worthy of the name will seek, in harmony with the best medical science of the time, to bring the word of faith to bear upon the miseries, the slaveries, of mind and body."

Greater Works than These Shall ye Do, because I Go to the Father. Jesus did not say greater wonders, he said "greater works"—greater in their scope and variety, greater in their continuity and wide utility. By the power of his grace and under guidance of his spirit we are actually doing the great works. To establish in the heart of Christendom a sense of obligation toward the blind, the sick, and all the defective of earth, resulting in such wise, human and generous treatment of their ills as was never dreamed of in the time of Christ, is a greater work than to open the eyes of one blind man at the Pool of Siloam.

When Jacob Riis, a Christian man, aroused other Christian men and women to take hold of the lower East Side of New York, and by replacing unsanitary tenements with decent dwellings and parks and playgrounds changed the whole face of the situation for thousands of struggling people, it was not a greater wonder, but it was a greater work than it would have been for Jacob Riis to have walked across the Hudson River on the water.

When John G. Paton went to the New Hebrides and changed the lives of those filthy cannibals into lives of Christian men, clothed, educated, and aspiring, by preaching and living the Christian Gospel, it was not so great a wonder as it would have been for him to have changed a bucket of water into a bucket of wine, but it was a greater work.

"Greater works than these shall ye do"—in the scope and variety, in the continuity and wide utility of Christian achievement, we are witnessing the fulfillment of this majestic promise.—Dr. Charles R. Brown in The Quest of Life.

The World Problem. The world is full of cripples, of maimed and halt and withered; crippled in body and mind, crippled in conscience and heart; prisoners of sin and shame and poverty, cumberers of the earth. How to reclaim them? That is the problem. How to set all cripples on their feet, so that not the fittest but the unfittest shall survive. There is the problem at the base of social science, the problem that vexes the souls of all philanthropists and lovers of God.—Dr. David James Russell, in The Gate Beautiful.

For Discussion. 1. Service is the coin in which humanity's greatest debts are paid.—William Allen White.

2. Faith cures in connection with evangelistic campaigns. See Faith Cures Investigated, The Congregationalist, Jan. 31, 1924.

3. The preacher is judged to a large extent by his sermons, rather than by his other activities. "Jesus Christ preached sermons. His sermons were greater than his miracles. Simon Peter preached sermons. His sermons were greater than his organizing activities. Paul preached sermons. It was his sermons that turned the world upside down."

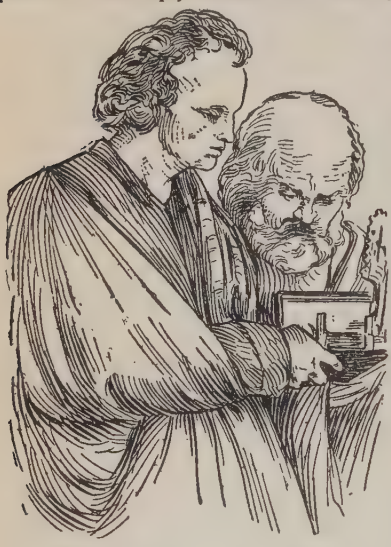
Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does the first sentence of our printed text mean? 2. Compare the practice of the Early Church and communism as it has been practiced in modern times. 3. What does

the member owe to his church? 4. What does the church owe to its community? 5. What is integrity? 6. What is the cure of falsehood?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
CURE OF A CRIPPLE AND ITS RESULTS

Beginning the Lesson. What is our lesson story? The cripple expressed his joy in a perfectly natural way. And he expressed his gratitude, too. How do you think Peter and John felt after they had been the means of bringing such a blessing to this man? Who are the successors of Peter in this work today?

One of America's foremost surgeons, a major in a military hospital near New York, was asked at the armistice if he intended to leave the army at once and resume his practice. His reply showed how he regarded the work God had given him to do.



Peter and John Albert Dürer

"Let me tell you a story," he said. "The other day there came to our hospital a contingent of wounded from France among whom I worked. Finally I came to a youngster whose leg was in a cast. I could see he was suffering agony in spite of the little, crooked, brave smile with which he answered my questions. He said they had fixed him up at a base hospital in France and that all through the trip over his leg had hurt him so that he couldn't sleep. 'It's all right, though,' he said. 'I guess I can stand it, and maybe in a few years the pain will wear away'; and the helpless, awful look came into his eyes again, though his lips still kept their pitiful, crooked little smile. Get what I'm telling you, now—he was contemplating years of torture, and he smiled!

"I made up my mind to do everything I could for that boy and looked him over myself. I found that in the hurry and crowd in France his cast had been put on poorly and had twisted his poor leg around and held it there. To make sure of the job this time I did every bit of it myself—took off the old cast, fixed the wound, measured and adjusted the new one, and saw him tucked up in his cot. The next morning, going through the ward, I stopped at his bed. He didn't say a word as he looked at me—he just smiled, and I tell you the difference between this smile and the one he had shown me yesterday brought a lump into my throat. I made up my mind right then and there that if I had been given the power to bring a smile like that to the face of even one of our boys there wasn't money enough in the United States to make me quit this job until there isn't one lad left who needs me."

Silver and Gold have I None. The train stopped at a seaside station, and a pale girl, who coughed incessantly, alighted. A young woman with a brogue and kind, merry face ran to meet her.

"Ah, an' it's welcome ye are, my dear! Take me arms. It's just a step. There it is—that white cottage on the beach. It was all planned and built by Miss Hayes. She keeps it up. From April to November there are ten of her friends there gettin' rested and strong. They each stay two weeks. Faith, an' that's a tiresome cough! We'll be gettin' rid of that wance, plase God!"

"You are so kind. I know you'll make me well," said the poor shop-girl, smiling.

"Is it me? It's Miss Hayes as'll cure you. I'm only her Irish chambermaid. I wish I could do some good meself; but I haven't a rid cint to give. My money all goes back to the ould folks in the ould country; but Miss Hayes's father—he's millions! She can help the poor!" and Molly's blue eyes filled with tears. She walked slowly, her arm around the sick woman's waist.

"You'll have a wee room all to yourself. I'll make you crame toast for tay—I'm foine on crame toast!" she ran on cheerily.

"Is that Miss Hayes in the door? Why, she is a young woman!" said the startled newcomer, as a slight girl advanced briskly to meet her.

"Ah? You are Jane Potts?"—glancing at a list in her hand. "I hope you will enjoy your holiday, Jane. You will stay until this day two weeks. A copy of the Home rules is in your chamber. Tea is at six, precisely. All lights must be out at ten, to the minute. Tomorrow morning I will see you and examine into your situation, habits and so on. I always exercise an oversight over the families, work and life of my women. You must go to your room now and rest."

"But I am not one of her women!" said the girl hotly, as she climbed the stairs. Molly heaped the pillows on her bed, brought her a cordial which checked the cough, and with affectionate pats bade her sleep until tea-time.

Molly looked after her mistress with reverence. God, she thought, had given her a great work to do for him. "An' what can I do that has no money at all?" she thought, shaking her head.

This little picture needs no words of ours to explain its meaning.—The Youth's Companion.

The Helping Hand.

"No lands nor gold do I hold in fee;
Naught can I give the world," said he,
But many a heart as he passed along
Was cheered by the lilt of his merry song;
While hapless wanderers gone astray,
Were guided back to the better way;
And eyes that were dimmed with tears the while
Would flash once more in an answering smile.
"The rarest gifts to be given away
Are neither lands nor gold," said they.
—Dixie Wolcott, in Lippincott's.

Paying the Price. The lesson was at an end, and the doctor looked over his class and wondered how much impression he had made. The boys were just verging on manhood; some of them were in the senior class of high school, some were already out in the world of business. The lesson had been about the miracles that the apostles had performed.

When the doctor had finished explaining the passage one boy looked up inquiringly.

"Dr. Jamison," he asked, "do you think anyone could perform miracles now?"

"Unquestionably," replied the doctor.

"Then why don't they do it?" a dozen voices asked.

"You all know something about physics," said Dr. Jamison slowly. "You know that you can convey a powerful electric current hundreds of miles from its source and set it at work virtually without loss."

The boys nodded.

"Now, there are two things to bear in mind: the power that the dynamo generates and the cable that transmits the power. Let us assume that the dynamo has produced the necessary energy; what is required of the cable?"

"Why, it must be connected with the dynamo," said one of the boys.

"Yes; but there is something else."

One of the boys said, "The cable must be insulated."

"Exactly! And the more nearly perfect the insulation the greater will be the energy that is transmitted. Now, spiritual power comes from God and is to be applied in some way—to healing the sick or to lifting the sinner fallen by the wayside. We are the cables. The first thing is to make the connection; the next thing is to insulate the cables. That is what the apostles did. Most of us lose spiritual power all along the line; we keep company with people who are worldly and unbelieving; we have sordid ambitions and frivolous pleasures. Thus when it comes to applying God's power conveyed through us—his faulty feed wires—there is no power to apply."

"Do you mean, sir, that we must have no pleasures?"

"Not at all. Christ made social visits. He traveled. He worked at his trade as a carpenter. But through it all he had one central purpose—to bring more abundant life to men. The apostles followed the example of their Master; none of them ever lost sight of the one aim that they had in life. If you want to be a spiritual power, you must pay the price: you must learn what the vital things in life are

and concentrate on them. Are we willing to pay the price? The apostles were willing, and we know what they accomplished."—The Youth's Companion.

Christ is Risen! A band of Turks one day descended on an Armenian village. A small number managed to escape and for days they wandered, footsore and weary and grief-stricken, living on herbs and leaves. Some of them died by the way. Some of them lost their faith and cried, "There is no Christ."

Then the priest who was leading them saw in the distance the American flag. It was flying over the camp of workers of the Near East Relief. With tears streaming down his face the priest called: "See, my children! It is not true. He is not dead. *Christos anesti!* Christ is risen!"

When the tired wanderers understood what the flag meant for them they sobbed, *"Alethos anesti!* He is risen indeed!"

The incident was told in a long account in The Youth's Companion, with this comment:—

"It is customary in all countries to associate the flag with military and naval victories. But there is another glory than military and naval glory—a fact that we sometimes forget. In all my experience I have never heard of a greater tribute being paid to any flag than the tribute the old Greek priest paid to the stars and stripes. Every time I see the flag I raise my hat to his memory and to the honor of the emblem that to him and to the little body of martyrs symbolized the Risen Christ—*Christos anesti!*

The Need of the Hour of Prayer. Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer. Prayer had an "hour," a definite time and place in their program of living. Their Master always had his hours of prayer. "A great while before day he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place and there prayed" (Mark 1.35); "He went up into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6.12); "He went, as his custom was, unto the Mount of Olives . . . and he kneeled down and prayed" (Luke 22.39, 41).

If Jesus felt the need of daily prayer, how presumptuous are we if we think we can live without it! Prayer is as necessary for us as winding is for a watch. As the watch must have strength imparted to its spring by daily winding, so we must have our strength reinforced by putting ourselves in daily connection with the Power above through prayer.

"Give God thy first thoughts, then, so shalt thou keep
Him company all day, and in him sleep."

We think we have a little space of time fenced off night and morning which we will spend in prayer, but how often the encircling fence is broken down by the duties and pleasures of the day! There is so much to be done some day that we think the morning prayer must be omitted, "just for this once." We are so weary at night that the evening prayer is forgotten. Perhaps the broken fence is repaired the next day, but it is not so strong as it was before, and it is more easily broken down the second time than it was the first.

An earnest man arose in a prayer-meeting and said that he had gained great strength from prayer, and that it had been his custom for many years to rise an hour earlier each day so as to have time for communion with God. A few of those present knew that this man's business required him to start to his work at five every morning, and yet he counted it gain to rise an hour earlier than he otherwise would in order to have time to pray.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

One smile can glorify a day,
One word new hope impart;
The least disciple need not say
There are no alms to give away
If love be in the heart.—Phœbe Cary.

Every deed of love and mercy, done to man, is done to me.—Dr. Henry Van Dyke.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What records of the growth of the church are given in Acts 1.15; 2.41, 47; 4.4; 5.14? 2. Where is Cyprus? 3. What was it that Ananias and Sapphira coveted? 4. How do these words apply to Ananias and Sapphira; insincere, hypocritical, false, envious, lying? 5. Is an acted lie as bad as a spoken one? 6. Why is it wrong to lie?

LESSON III—APRIL 19

LIFE IN THE EARLY CHURCH

GOLDEN TEXT: The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul. Acts 4.32

LESSON Acts 4.1 to 5.11 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 133

ACTS 4.32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one *of them* said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need.

36 And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, 37 having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

ACTS 5 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 and kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? 4 While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. CHRISTIAN UNITY, Acts 4.32-35. There was the greatest unity of feeling and purpose in the early Christian Church; as the proverbial expression has it, they were of one heart and soul.

"My own idea of a church is a great religious democracy, where the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant, the cultured and all others, gather to worship and commune with a Being so far exalted as to make relative human conditions unmentionable, unthinkable, and unnoticeable in his presence" (Leslie M. Shaw).

Settled on the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea, and living in scattered communities throughout Palestine at this time, were the Essenes, a sect that literally had all things common. Each one deposited whatever he possessed in a general treasury, of which several managers took charge, supplying from it the needs of all. In Egypt there was a Jewish sect called the *Therapeutai* whose members gave away all their possessions when they joined the order, and there was among them no distinction of rich or poor. It is said of the disciples at Jerusalem that "not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." With them, however, the giving up of possessions was voluntary (5.4)—each one regarded his property as held in trust for others. Property was sold and the money placed at the disposal of the apostles only as some rich and generous member saw there was need.

"It was a fraternal stock company for mutual aid and protection. No man was bound to come into it unless he wished; but if he did come in, he was bound to act honestly. Of course it is possible for any band of men who like the Jerusalem system to re-establish it today; but its result of pauperism in the primitive church was not particularly encouraging" (Dr. Henry van Dyke).

With great power the apostles testified to the resurrection of the Lord, and great grace—God's free favor—was upon them all. The proof of the divine grace was shown in the wonderful generosity of the Christian community: as need for assistance arose among the poor, those who had lands or houses sold them and brought the amount received to the apostles for them to distribute. "Laid them at the apostles' feet" is a figurative expression which doubtless arose from the Oriental custom of laying gifts at the feet of kings; it meant that the money was left in the apostles' control. The apostles afterwards begged to be relieved of this duty, Acts 6.1-6.

II. The Example of Barnabas, 5.36. A man named Joseph, surnamed Barnabas by the apostles, a name meaning Son of Exhortation—given him, no doubt, because of his skill as an exhorter—a Levite and a native of Cyprus, sold a field and brought all the money to the apostles. We are interested in all the details given about

Barnabas, for he is a man whom we come to greatly admire a little later as we study the history of the early church.

III. THE EXAMPLE OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA, 5.1-5. In contrast with the true generosity and square dealing of Barnabas, we are now told how a husband and wife, named Ananias and Sapphira, planned together to gain credit for generosity which they did not deserve. They sold a possession, kept back part of the money received, and gave the rest to the apostles as though it were their all. "Ananias" means "Jehovah is gracious" and "Sapphira" means "Beautiful": "Their names were favorable and beautiful," comments Bengel, "but their principles were bad."

"And I, too, can keep back part of the price. I can bow before the Lord, in the attitude of prayer, as though I were offering him my all, and it is only a seeming offering, for I am keeping back my mind and soul. In my speech with my fellow men I can keep back part of the truth. I can offer an apparent courtesy, which in reality is packed with bitterness. I can 'smile and smile and be a villain.' It is holiness that the Lord seeks, allness, wholeness, everything stamped with his seal. He seeks the completeness of the offering, all our life and all our estate, so that all that is within us and all that is without us may praise and bless his name" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

Peter exposed their guilt. "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of the land?" "The cause of the overt act is a heart filled with sin" (Dr. Abbott). The selling of property was wholly voluntary, Peter reminded Ananias: how was it that he had conceived this thing in his heart? He had not lied unto men, but unto God.

A lie may be acted as well as spoken. "Here in the Early Apostolic Church was a beautiful thing, the spirit of mutual sacrifice. 'I shall work through that,' said Satan, 'and corrupt it.' Ananias and Sapphira talked their 'giving' over and Satan was present. 'It seems a lot to give up everything,' said Ananias. 'Couldn't we keep a bit to fall back upon?' ('They'll never know,' whispered Satan.) 'You know, Sapphira, we are getting older.' ('And you can get your ends more cheaply,' suggested Satan.) 'Let us give part!' ('You can keep it quiet,' insinuated Satan.) And so they agreed" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

And Ananias fell dead, to the great fear of all. "God would teach that nothing unhallowed can be admitted in the service of his house. And the church was now his house" (Dr. J. M. Stifler).

"Our mission is not to justify the ways of God to men, but to rectify the ways of men to God" (Dr. W. H. P. Faunce).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. After the ascension of Christ, how large a company of his followers awaited in Jerusalem the coming of the Holy Spirit? After Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, how many others believed in Christ? After the healing of the lame man and Peter's discourse, how many more became members of this community of believers? In our first lesson of the Quarter, what were we told about the manner of life of the early Church?

The Prayer Meeting after the Release of Peter and John. When Peter and John had been imprisoned over night and brought before the Sanhedrin because of their healing of the cripple, but were released because nothing could be charged against them, the miracle could not be denied. They went at once to the meeting-place of the company of believers, and reported the threats which had been made when they were ordered not to teach or preach in the name of Jesus. All realized the seriousness of the situation. Together they repeated the second Psalm, which they recognized as a prophecy fulfilled in them, and then the apostles appealed to God to help them do what they had told the Sanhedrin they should do, speak his word with boldness. The answer to their prayer seemed to come in a sign: the place where they were was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Founding of the Early Church. The apostles had been guilty of "contempt of court"; they had renounced their allegiance to the great Jewish tribunal. They had become the head of an independent church, responsible only to their heavenly Leader.

The Scene of the Lesson. It is still Jerusalem. It was probably at the regular meeting-place of the Church that Ananias and Sapphira met their fate.

Cyprus, mentioned as the home of Barnabas, is an island in the eastern Mediterranean.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

In all our teaching we must endeavor to get at the spirit underlying actions, and we must give principles instead of rules for right conduct. The spirit of unity and generosity and brotherly kindness which prompted those who had possessions to sell them and give all the money for the poor is what we must commend in their actions, rather than the deeds themselves; and the spirit of insincerity and hypocrisy and desire for praise which animated Ananias and Sapphira is what we must condemn in their actions, rather than their failure to give away all the money they received.

In the matter of truthfulness, it is in the intent to deceive that the wrong of an untrue statement or action lies. Teach pupils to love the truth. Teach them that truth lies at the foundation of all honorable working together of individuals or nations. Teach them that untruthfulness destroys self-respect, and sows seeds of evil everywhere. Help them to "radiate integrity."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
LESSONS FROM THE EARLY CHURCH

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with The Historical Background.

What Aristides Wrote the Emperor Hadrian about the Early Christians. Those who grieve them they comfort, and they do good to their enemies. When their slaves become Christian, they call them without distinction brethren; they walk in all humility and kindness, and falsehood is not found among them, and they love one another.

And they rescue the orphan from him who does him violence, and he who has gives to him who has not, without grudging. And if there is a man among them who is poor or needy and they have not abundance of necessaries, they fast two or three days that they may supply the needy with their necessary food.

They live honestly and soberly as the Lord their God commanded them. Every morning, and at all hours, on account of the goodness of God towards them, they praise and laud him; and over their food and over their drink they render him thanks.

And if any righteous person of their number passes away from the world, they rejoice and give thanks to God, and they follow his body as if he were only moving from one place to another; and when a child is born to any of them they praise God, and if again it chance to die in its infancy, they praise God mightily as for one who has passed through the world without sins.

As men who know God they ask from him petitions which are proper for him to give, and for them to receive; and thus they accomplish the course of their lives. And because they acknowledge the goodness of God towards them, lo! on account of them there flows forth the beauty that is in the world. And truly they are of the number of those who have found the truth by going about and seeking it. But the good deeds which they do they do not proclaim in the ears of the multitude, and they take care that no one shall perceive them, and hide their gift, as he who has found a treasure and hides it. And they labor to become righteous as those who expect to see their Messiah, and receive from him the promises made to them, with great glory.

Secular Communism and that of the Early Church. We have here the keynote of Communism. Alas, what strident discords have followed it! What brawls and bickerings in the sacred name of brotherhood! What shoutings of mobs and confusion worse confounded! Nevertheless, back of this tortured proposition lies a splendid truth, if we can only find it.

The usual definition of Communism is "a condition in which there is no recognition of separate rights to property." Socialism is applied to Communism: a system which has for its object the reconstruction of society on the basis of an obliteration of property rights. The underlying principle is a general distribution of goods. This is the prolific root of nearly all the social heresies which have prevailed in recent times; and their origin is traced almost without exception, to this incident in the primitive church. An examination will show, however, that they have generally been as far removed from its spirit as night from day.

The first point of divergence is observed in the fact that this Christian community was distinctively a mutual affair. There was nothing compulsory about it. There was no confiscation of goods, but a voluntary giving up. In modern Communism there is a frank denial of property rights. The best definition of a Communist is that given by the "Corn-law Rhymer" in these words:

"What is a Communist? One who has yearnings
For equal division of unequal earnings;
Idler or bungler, or both, he is willing
To fork out his penny and pocket your shilling."

But that definition does not apply to these disciples. There was no confusion of the terms *meum* and *teum*. There was no attempt to subvert the social order by enforcing the maxim, "What's yours is mine and what's mine is yours," but simply a cheerful surrender of the possessions of each for the benefit of all.

The second point of departure is in the fact that the Communism of the early Church was purely benevolent, while secular Communism, in its various forms and phases, is avowedly selfish. The thought of the disciples was to relieve the necessities of the poor; not to pull down, but to lift up. There was no clamoring for a share of what belonged to others; but everyone was eager to do what he could to help his fellow men.

The third point of departure is in the fact that the Communism of the early Church was distinctly a religious movement. God was back of it and the mind of Christ was in it.

The best illustration of secular Communism is the French Revolution. It began with a formal enactment of the *Corps Legislatif* in these terms, "There is no God!" The red-capped mob caught up the cry and passed it along the streets, "There is no God!" That night The Terror began; and the streets of Paris ran with blood. The best of the nation were led to the guillotine. The test of loyalty to the New Order was the drinking of a cup filled with the blood of the aristocracy. The homes of the wealthy were looted, and a practical demonstration was afforded of the results of a general distribution of property. The sanctions of the government were destroyed; law and order were overturned; the foundations of the great deep were broken up.

The disciples in framing this original Community were moved by their conviction that God is owner of all. As to their possessions, whether much or little, they were only held in trust until called for.—Condensed from At the Gate Beautiful, by Dr. David James Burrell.

Meeting the Claims of the Church. "The multitude of them that believed" in the early church seem to have met its claims with eager willingness. The apostles taught with great power, and great grace was upon them all. "Most churches we have known have been like merchant ships with far too small a crew and far too many passengers," is the opinion of an editorial in The Congregationalist. They were all workers in that early church ship, but the editorial observation just quoted is unfortunately too true of our church ships today. What is the relation of passengers to crews in your church? Have you disowned responsibility? "Does the minister pray and the choir sing for you, while you sit with folded hands? Is there no place in the activities of the church where a man or woman of about your height and weight and brains and social influence might be of use?"

What is church work? Dr. Josiah Strong declares that to help save the world in any way should be considered church work. The church, he defines as a group of men and women who associate in the love and service of Jesus Christ and meet at stated times for instruction and inspiration. "But the members of the group are just as much members when they leave the church building as when they enter," are his impressive words. "If we interpreted the term 'church work' more broadly it would carry the religious spirit into the secular life. Church work should be the endeavor to apply the teaching of Jesus Christ to each duty and to each relationship."

Why Falsehood Was Treated with Such Seriousness in the Early Church. "Perkins is a corrupting influence wherever he lives," declared a stern observer. "It is not merely that he tells lies. He is a lie. His attitude toward life is false. His thoughts are false. His tones are false. The expression of his face is false. Everything he does seems to mean one thing and really means another. Enough men like him would disintegrate society."

Truth is the foundation upon which society rests. If nobody ever believed any-

body else social relations would become impossible. At bottom a lie is an attack on society. It cuts the arteries of the social organism. Civilization is a bank. It is based on trust in men's word. If there were enough lies there would be a run on the bank of civilization and the structure would go down. This it is which makes falsehood so deadly, and this is why the emerging of falsehood was treated with such seriousness in the early Church.

Two world-seasoned travelers were once having a discussion about the New Testament. "It has always seemed to me," said one of them, "that the moral enthusiasm of the New Testament is rather overwrought. Take the Ananias and Sapphira story, for instance. No doubt that lie was a bad thing, but wasn't it taken rather too seriously? If we went on that basis today wouldn't the population of the world be rather definitely decreased?" His friend waited for a moment. Then he said, with rather more than usual solemnity: "The population of the world has been rather seriously decreased by a nation which considered the solemn promises of a treaty only a scrap of paper. The world would be a good deal safer if we were nearer to the New Testament standard of veracity. Only truth and trust keep society from falling apart."—Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, in the Christian Advocate.

For Discussion. 1. Behold how these Christians love one another! The spirit in which the issues between fundamentalism and liberalism have been discussed. Our Savior said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye shall have love one to another."

2. Nobody ought to have everything till everybody has something.—Winston Churchill.

3. Law honesty. There are men who do not divide actions merely into those that are honest and those that are not, but create a third subdivision, that of "law honesty," or that kind of honesty which consists in keeping clear of the penitentiary.—Theodore Roosevelt.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What work has our church which corresponds to the "serving of tables" in the early church? 2. What share have you in the work? Is lynch law comparable to the action of the mob in our story? 4. Is lynching decreasing?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
HOW THE EARLY CHRISTIANS LIVED TOGETHER

Beginning the Lesson. A rich young orphan girl was greatly troubled on hearing it said that the rich owe their money to the poor. "Why do I owe my money to the poor?" she asked. "Why should I not spend it for myself if I choose? My money came to me and it was meant for me, not for the poor." A friend interested her in a summer home in the country for poor children, and after she learned what joy there is in caring for others, she exclaimed: "Oh, it is true after all, I do owe my money to the poor, I who have so much am only given it in trust for those who have so little."

The little company of believers in Jesus at Jerusalem were most of them poor, but no one was allowed to suffer, for those who had possessions believed that it was their duty to help care for those who had none. When they sold a piece of property, what did they do with the money?

The First Tragedy in the Early Church. The Rev. F. W. Boreham tells our lesson story in his inimitable way. In his book entitled A Reel of Rainbow it follows his retelling of an ancient story of how the Devil sought long and anxiously for means of extinguishing the image of God in the sons of men. One suggestion after another had been made and discarded, until this brilliant idea occurred to him—"I will make apes of them!" And from that time to this the souls of men have been ruined by being taught to imitate, to counterfeit, to copy. Here is Mr. Boreham's story:

"I will make an ape of him!" said the Tempter as he gazed on one of the Church's earliest and most promising converts. Among the thousands who crowded into the Kingdom on the Day of Pentecost were a young married couple. You might have searched the world in vain for a happier home than theirs.

One day this happy husband and this happy wife went, as their custom was, to the gathering of the infant Church. And it happened that, that day, Peter and John told of the miracle at the Beautiful Gate; and of the excitement that it caused; and of their brief imprisonment; and of their triumphant acquittal. And the meeting was transformed first into a praise-meeting and then into a prayer-meeting. It was one

of the golden experiences of the infant Church. Our young husband and his happy bride entered to the full into the rapture of it. Barnabas, another of the disciples, was so moved by the exultation of that never-to-be-forgotten day that, having sold a piece of land, he brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. And the apostles praised him for his noble gift; and our young couple went to their home that night with those words of praise ringing in their ears.

"I will make apes of them!" said the Tempter; for they, too, had a piece of land. And so, with those words of praise still ringing in their ears, they went next day and sold their land as Barnabas had sold his; and, like Barnabas, they, too, brought the money—or part of it—and laid it at the apostles' feet. They brought a part, and pretended that it was the whole! And they waited to hear such words of praise of them as had been spoken that day before Barnabas.

But Peter said, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, did it not remain thine own? And after it was sold was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

And that day came the Church's first tragedy. Ananias and Sapphira were carried out and buried in a desolate spot just outside the city. And there the grass grew long and rank over their dishonored graves; and every man who passed by picked up a stone and threw it contemptuously at their resting place. And when the name of Ananias and Sapphira were removed from the roll of the infant Church, all those who were gathered together prayed in silence that they might each be saved from the melancholy fate of the counterfeit.

A Right Way and a Wrong Way. There are two ways of getting things—a right way and a wrong way. The right way is to pay their price in money or labor or sacrifice. The wrong way is to get them by lying or stealing, trickery or deception. Ananias and Sapphira wanted a reputation for generosity and they tried to get it by the latter way. Perhaps some of you covet the name of being splendid athletes or bright scholars. It is not the name for it, but the thing itself, that you should earnestly desire. Even boys and girls will stoop to get a coveted reputation by deception. "Is this your work, and did you do it all yourself?" a boy is asked. "Yes," he replies. "Splendid!" But some one else did most of it for him!

Suppose you succeed in passing the work of some one else as your own. What will happen when examination day comes? Will not your teacher wonder at your poor work then, and guess what you have been doing? But suppose you succeed by deception, what will happen? The success will lead you to do it again, and you will keep on doing it, till all honor, conscience, sense of right, your very soul, is dead within you. You can't get the great things cheaply. You have to pay the price. You can't make a success of deception.

Ruskin's Counsel. "A lie," Ruskin says, "may be told by silence, by equivocation, by the accent of a syllable, by a glance of the eye attaching a peculiar significance to a sentence."

"If you tell the truth," he wrote in one of his letters to his sister, "you have infinite power supporting you; but if not, you have infinite power against you. The children of a King should be above all deceit, for they have a mighty and a jealous Protector. When we lie, we rely on other than God. We may for a time seem to humbug men, but not God."

The First Law of the Boy Scouts. A scout's honor is to be trusted. If a scout were to break his honor by telling a lie, or by not carrying out an order exactly when trusted on his honor to do so, he may be directed to hand over his scout badge, and never to wear one again. He may also be directed to cease to be a scout.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. One of the sublimest things in the world is plain truth.—Bulwer Lytton.

The only safety for a man who desires to appear good is to be good.—Lyman J. Gage.

You will never habitually speak the truth if you aim only to speak it; you must aim to live it.—David Gregg.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Whose example was Stephen following in his attitude towards his slayers? 2. How was he able to be so forgiving? 3. Look up one of the following martyrs and tell how he met death: Ignatius, Cyprian, Ridly, Latimer, John Williams, James Chalmers.

STEPHEN THE FIRST MARTYR

GOLDEN TEXT: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life

LESSON Acts 6.1 to 7.60 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 27.7-14

ACTS 6.8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people. 9 But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. 10 And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. 11 Then they suborned men, who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God. 12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him into the council, 13 and set up false witnesses, who said, This man ceaseth not to speak words against this holy place, and the law: 14 for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us. 15 And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

ACTS 7.54 Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56 and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. 57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord: 58 and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *the Lord*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE ARREST OF STEPHEN, Acts 6.8-15. Jews from everywhere came on annual pilgrimages to the Holy City, and many of them stayed on there permanently. Those from certain regions were numerous enough to have their separate synagogues: among them were the Libertines, probably Jews—or their descendants—who had been taken to Italy by Pompey as slaves and had afterwards received their freedom and been allotted a section in Rome for their residence; Cyrenians and Alexandrians—Jews from Cyrene and Alexandria in Northern Africa; and Jews of Cilicia and Asia, provinces of Asia Minor.

These Greek-speaking Jews hated Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit (Acts 6.5), therefore full of grace and power, who wrought great wonders and signs among the people. They disputed with him but came off poorly in argument, for they were no match for the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. Then they had recourse to calumny. They induced men to declare that they had heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God. Contempt of Moses was held to be contempt of God, and an attempt to turn people from devotion to God was punishable with death according to the Jewish law.

To give voice to damaging statements against another is most serious business. If we do not know the statements to be true, we have no right to utter them. If we do know them to be true, unless there is some good and sufficient reason for their becoming known to others, let us not bear even true witness against our neighbor. Let us deal with our neighbor's reputation as we would have him deal with ours.

After stirring up the people and the Pharisees, the elders and the scribes, they seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin met on the temple mount, and the temple was in full view. As is evident from his defense, 7.48, Stephen had taught that God could be worshiped everywhere, not in the temple alone. This teaching the false witnesses distorted into a charge of speaking against the temple and the law, of declaring that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the temple (Stephen probably had repeated the words of Jesus recorded in Jn. 2.19: compare the charge against Jesus, Mk. 14.58) and change the Mosaic laws. By "the customs which Moses delivered unto us" were meant the laws contained in the Pentateuch and also the "traditions of the elders," with their minute laws.

And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on Stephen, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. His thoughts were filled with "the God of Glory"—no wonder his face shone! Beautifully does Tennyson's verse express the source of that divine radiance:

Looking upward, full of grace,
He prayed, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face.

We are told that after Moses communed with God on the Mount, his face shone with so bright a glory that until it faded men could not look upon him. When Jesus was praying on the "Mount of Transfiguration" "the fashion of his countenance was altered" and Peter and John saw "his glory."

"That altered fashion of countenance may stand as a symbol of the power of communion with God to breathe new beauty into our earthly life, and we, too, may have the glory of God reflected on our faces" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

II. STEPHEN'S DEFENSE, Acts 7.1-53. "Brethren and fathers, hearken," he began, and then rehearsed the ancient history of Israel, God's dealings with Abraham and Joseph and Moses and the Children of Israel in the wilderness and David and Solomon. His hearers must have listened at first without realizing the drift of his words, but when it gradually dawned upon them that he was skillfully showing that God's revelation to his people had been progressive, that their fathers had always been rebellious, first rejecting God's messages and afterwards accepting them, and that their religion was a spiritual religion, that God did not need an earthly temple, as a quotation from Isaiah proved—as they grasped all this, their anger knew no bounds. Stephen saw that if he would apply his words to his hearers he must do it quickly. Boldly he cried, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit. Of the Righteous One ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not."

III. THE EFFECT UPON HIS ENEMIES, Acts 7.54. His enemies were infuriated. They were cut to the heart, not "pricked in their heart" with sorrow and repentance as were those who listened to Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, but "cut to the heart" with rage and fury, so that they "gnashed on him with their teeth," words which "express the frenzy of rage, only restrained by a brute-like grinding of the teeth."

When the members of the Sanhedrin went to the trial of Stephen, much as they hated him they little thought that they would be gnashing their teeth at him like infuriated beasts. He who has "a hasty temper" and has not learned to keep it under control, never knows to what lengths it may betray him.

IV. STEPHEN'S VISION, Acts 7.55, 56. Looking up steadfastly into the heavens, Stephen had "a vision of the soul," beholding the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

"When persecution's torrent blaze
Wraps the unshrinking martyr's head,
When fade all earthly flowers and bays,
When summer friends are gone and fled,
Is he alone in that dark hour,
Who owns the Lord of love and power?" (Keble).

"Behold, I see the heavens opened," Stephen cried out—"the opening of the heavens" is a familiar Jewish metaphor for insight into divine things—"and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Recall Mt. 26.64: "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power." While Jesus often used the phrase "Son of man" for himself, it is not used by others save here and in Rev. 1.13 and 14.14. It is quoted in Heb. 2.6.

"The question of how Stephen saw the vision, whether objectively or subjectively, physically or spiritually, with his eyes or with his soul, while interesting, of course, is not to us important. That is not our question. Our question is—Do we see it, that vision of a Man opening heaven, revealing God; do we see it?" (David Hummell Greer).

V. THE STONING AND DEATH OF STEPHEN, Acts 7.57-60. To drown Stephen's words for themselves, and to arouse the rest to violent action, his enemies cried out with a loud voice, at the same time stopping their ears (indicating by this that they regarded his words as blasphemous), and rushing upon him they dragged him out of the city and stoned him.

Stoning was the customary Jewish mode of inflicting the death penalty, but under the Roman rule only the Roman procurator had the right to put anyone to death

SAUL WITNESSING THE STONING OF STEPHEN

From a Painting by N. H. J. Westlake

(Jn. 18.31). The stoning always took place outside the city. A crier went before the condemned one announcing his crime, and at the place of execution the latter was asked to confess his crime to God. The witnesses who testified against him must cast the first stones, after having first placed their hands on his head to signify that he was bearing his own guilt. (Compare the custom in the case of the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement, Lev. 16.21,22.)

In the case of Stephen, the Sanhedrin may have legally put to vote the question of sentencing him, for though they and the people with them became a mob intent only on his death, part, at least, of the requirements seem to have been carried out. The witnesses laid aside their flowing outer garments in order that they might cast their stones, and it may have been when asked to confess that Stephen had the opportunity of kneeling down and praying.

The witnesses laid their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. According to Greek custom, a man could be called young until he was forty years of age. This is the first mention of Saul the persecutor who became Paul the apostle.

"Oh, for the strain that rang to our reviling strain
Still, when the bruisèd limbs sank upon the sod,
Oh, for the eyes that looked their last in smiling,
Last on this world here, but their first on God!"

"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," Stephen cried as they hurled the stones upon him. On the cross Jesus had said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit." Polycarp, Augustine, Huss, Jerome of Prague, Bernard, Luther, Melanchthon, Xavier, and countless others died with Stephen's prayer upon their lips. "Stephen's calm committal of his spirit to the Lord is so palpably inconsistent with the doctrine of the state of purgatory, or sleep, between death and the judgment, that Roman Catholic theology exempts all martyrs from purgatorial discipline" (Dr. Lyman Abbott).

"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," Stephen also cried. Jesus on the cross had said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." An infidel once asked Dr. Parker what God did for Stephen, meaning that if there were a God he would have rescued Stephen. "What did God do for him?" Dr. Parker returned. "In that moment of suffering and helplessness God enabled Stephen to say, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' That was what the Almighty did, and in working this miracle of forgiveness in the spirit of the martyred man God did more for Stephen than if he had sent a legion of angels to protect him from the ruffianism which wrought his death."

"We are too apt to conclude that such grandeur of soul as was Stephen's was attained only in ancient times," comments Dr. Watkinson. "But again and again are the most magnificent things of our faith and love, of heroism and sacrifice, repeated. Miss Cavell in Belgium has furnished another splendid illustration. Hemmed in by a brutal soldiery who 'gnashed on her with their teeth,' she was at once, like Stephen, heroic and tender and forgiving."

And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

"Dead? Stephen dead? So the mob said as they thrust his bruised body aside. So the rabbis reported to the Sanhedrin: 'At last we have silenced him.' So the disciples said at their next meeting in the upper room: 'Our spokesman is dead; who will take his place?' But Stephen was not dead; he had just begun to live. He had entered on an immortal career of usefulness and left his influence behind him. There is no measure in time or space to the influence of a consecrated life. Be thou faithful unto death, therefore, if thou wouldst have the crown! (Dr. David James Burrell).

VI. STEPHEN'S BURIAL, 8.2. Stephen was given an honorable burial by "devout men." "These were clearly not believers, but some of the deeply religious among the Jews, who knew unsullied goodness when they saw it" (R. C. Gillie).

From very early times when the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed, Christians were wont to recite the names of the martyrs after thanking God "for those who had departed this life in his faith and fear." The day on which a martyr died was celebrated as his birthday. "St. Stephen's Birthday" they called the day of his stoning, "for," said they, "was it not for him a birth into a better life?"

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. To what size has the Early Church grown? What trouble from without have they met? What wrong within

had troubled them? What were the two sayings on the cross contained in our lesson upon the Crucifixion?

The Apostles again Imprisoned. Popular enthusiasm grew from day to day, and faith in the apostles' power became so great that it was believed that Peter's shadow falling on the sick in the streets had healing value. People from beyond Jerusalem heard the news and came with their sick and demon-possessed.

The jealousy and enmity of the high priests and Sadducees were thoroughly aroused, and they had the apostles imprisoned. The next morning the latter were found in the temple preaching as usual. Brought before the Sanhedrin they were accused of disobedience and of intent to make the Sanhedrin answerable for the death of Jesus. "Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching!" the high priest exclaimed. How fine is that testimony to the work of the apostles, coming from the lips of their bitterest enemy! "We must obey God rather than man," calmly returned Peter, and added that the apostles and the Holy Spirit were witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus whom they, his enemies, had slain.

No wonder the authorities were angry enough to kill Peter then and there, but one cool person, a learned doctor of the law named Gamaliel, asked to have the prisoners

The Place of the Stoning of Stephen

removed and then calmed the excited members by reminding them of others who had "given themselves out to be somebody"—Theudas, and Judas of Galilee—and their claims had come to naught. Then he counselled that these apostles be let alone, for if they were impostors their work would be overthrown, but if they were divinely commissioned, then the authorities would be fighting against God. The Sanhedrin listened to Gamaliel. The apostles were freed after being beaten and again charged not to speak in the name of Jesus. They departed rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name, and every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus as the Christ.

New Conditions. Evidently some little period of time separates the sixth chapter of The Acts from the fifth, for now the Hellenists, or Greek-speaking Jews, form a considerable part of the Church. The second trouble within the Church arose from the complaint of these Grecian Jews that their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food to the poor. The apostles had the oversight of this distribution, and they found the time ripe for a division of their labors. They called a public meeting and announced that it was not right for them to neglect the work of preaching and teaching in order to look after the needy, and asked that seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, be appointed for the latter work. As Chrysostom observes, "It needed great philosophy to hear the complaints of the widows." Stephen, Philip and five others were then appointed and consecrated for this office.

And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

The Reason for the Hatred of Stephen. He was among the first to see and declare that Christianity had superseded Judaism.

The Place of Stoning. The charge against Stephen and his defence were made

at the regular meeting-place of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. The place of stoning, to which he was hurried, was, according to rabbinical tradition, the place north of the city outside the modern Damascus Gate (formerly called St. Stephen's Gate) at the hill now known as "The New Calvary."

The Time. The fact that Stephen was stoned to death by the people although the procurator alone could legally inflict the death penalty, suggests that the time must have been 36 or 37 A. D., when Pilate had been deposed and another procurator had not been appointed.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Stephen and Philip and the other five men were appointed to their office to relieve the pressure upon the apostles. It was not meet that the latter should take time from the ministry of the Word to serve tables. Nor is it meet that Church-School teachers should keep the record of attendance, pass the Bibles, take up the collection, open the windows, or in any way look after the necessary routine matters of the class work. Each class should be organized with its secretary, whose duty it is to keep the records, its treasurer, who is responsible for the collection, etc. Pupils assume such duties gladly and the responsibility is good for them.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE CHARACTER AND MESSAGE OF STEPHEN

Beginning the Lesson. Who is a martyr? One who has been put to death for his faith, you answer. That is the meaning of the word as it is now used, but originally it meant only a witness. The Greek word martur from which it is derived, is used for *witness* throughout Acts. Only in one instance is it translated *martyr* in the Authorized Version: in Acts 22.20 Paul says, "And when the blood of the martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death." In the Revised Version the original word is restored, and it reads, Stephen thy witness. Because witnessing to the truth was so generally attended by persecution, a witness or martyr was one who suffered for the cause he loved, and early writers applied the word to those who were persecuted unto death. In this sense Stephen was the first Christian martyr. "The cup that I drink ye must drink, and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized," Jesus had said to his followers. The first one to fulfill his words was Stephen. Ere long he was followed by a multitude of other Christian martyrs. In fact, the early Christians under the Roman persecution endured the most dreadful tortures gladly, counting it joy to suffer because their Lord had suffered. They had not the slightest fear of death, they coveted the martyr's crown. The Roman rulers, Traian and Marcus Aurelius, who had sought to put an end to Christianity by putting men to death, found that, instead of causing others to retract it only made them the more zealous Christians, and, as Tertullian observed, the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church.

The Character of Stephen. In the sixth chapter of The Acts there are brief descriptions of Stephen: he was of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom (3); a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit (5); full of grace and power (8); the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake (10). Clearly he was a remarkable man, a man of great spiritual insight, great force of character, great executive ability, and great power among the early Christians: he wrought great wonders and signs among the people. He was also a thinker, as his defense when brought before the Sanhedrin shows. He not only bore witness to Jesus as the Christ, but he dared to proclaim that the Crucified and Risen Christ was the fulfilment of the earlier dispensation, that his coming meant the overthrow of Judaism. The new wine must burst the old bottles.

Stephen's Defense. I am often struck by the skill with which Stephen conducted his defense before his implacable enemies. A reasoned argument for the truth of Christianity, such as might have been fitting before an impartial tribunal, would have been useless when addressed to judges such as his. I suppose many are considerably puzzled by what seems to them the irrelevance of his discourse. Why should he spend all this time recounting the familiar history of his people, which seems to have so little bearing on the question at stake? The first reason is that this was his best way of getting a hearing. He was simply recounting incidents as to which he and his judges were at one. There was no dispute between them as to the correctness of

what he was saying, and no line could have been adopted by him more calculated to conciliate his opponents. His method had also this incidental advantage, that it made clear his own real adhesion to the Old Testament. However revolutionary his religion might be, it left the Old Testament untouched. But if he had simply constructed a defense which had only these recommendations, he might as well have been silent. It was indispensable to gain a hearing, but the advantage would have counted for nothing had he said nothing to the point.

But when we look closely at the speech, we are surprised to see with what consummate ability it has been planned. He had been accused of attacking the unique sanctity of the temple and the permanence of the Mosaic dispensation. In his reply he selects his incidents to break the force of the accusation. Two strains are twined together in his speech. The former and the more important is, that some of God's greatest revelations to his people had been given outside the Holy Land. His attack accordingly on the unique religious position assigned to the temple has the warrant of the Old Testament itself. Moreover, he brings out at various points the rebellious character of the Israelites and their unwillingness to accept the messengers whom God had sent them. And thus he prepares for the conclusion that their present attitude towards Jesus is only of a piece with the rebellion of their fathers. Having thus virtually demonstrated his case, such defense as can be offered before that tribunal is complete. Accordingly, all that remains is to unmask his batteries and pour in his fire.—A. S. Peake, in The Heroes and Martyrs of Faith.

Crimes Committed in the Name of Religion. In one of his political campaigns, Lloyd George was speaking in a hall in Wales when a brick crashed through the window and fell at his feet on the stage. Slowly the witty Welshman stooped and picked it up. Holding it high above his head, he dramatically exclaimed, "Behold the only argument of our opponents!" One thinks of the poverty of a religion that crucified Jesus and stoned Stephen. Think of the hollowness of a thing called religion that found expression in stoning a fellowman. It seems incredible. Religion, what crimes have been committed in thy name! Think of the persecutors of the Huguenots; think of the burning of witches; think of the cold wickedness that stoned Stephen. We are not quite so crude today; we kill men with pen-points; we freeze them in an atmosphere of hate; we call them names that sting and burn.—John R. Ewers, in The Christian Century.

The Blood of the Martyrs Is the Seed of the Church. Fifteen hundred years after Stephen was stoned to death at Jerusalem another Christian martyr died with the same words of prayer upon his lips. He was a Scottish martyr—the very first of the Scottish Reformation. He was burned alive in front of the old college of St. Andrews, on the last day of February in the year 1528. His name was Patrick Hamilton; his personal character was very winsome; and he was under thirty years of age when he suffered martyrdom.

Hamilton was of noble blood, and indeed was somewhat nearly related to the young King James V. He had studied at the universities of Paris and Louvain; and at Wittenberg he had made the acquaintance of Luther. He brought back with him to Scotland tidings of the progress of the Reformation in Germany, and preached the reformed doctrines to his countrymen with boldness, zeal, and winning fervor. Soon the clergy became alarmed, and resolved to silence the voice of the young preacher.

Archbishop Beaton—uncle of the famous cardinal who burned George Wishart eighteen years afterwards—at length summoned Hamilton to St. Andrews to be tried for heresy before a council of bishops and priests. It was in vain that at the so-called trial, the Reformer answered clearly and calmly all the written charges brought against him. New accusations were founded on his replies. And he was immediately burned at the stake as a heretic. Shortly before he yielded his soul to God, he cried out, "How long, O Lord, shall darkness overwhelm this realm? How long wilt thou suffer this tyranny of men?" Then he ended by praying with Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

This cruel deed was done to arrest the progress of the Reformation; but, instead, the judicial murder of the gentle and courageous youth drew more attention than ever to the truths for which he suffered. The adherents of the reformed doctrines increased so greatly, that by and by one of the Archbishop's gentleman-retainers said to him, "My lord, if ye will burn any more, let them be burnt in cellars, for the reek of Master Patrick Hamilton has infected as many as it blew upon."—Charles Jerdan, in For the Lambs of the Flock.

For Discussion. 1. Ancient ecclesiastical arguments—beating (chapter 2), stoning (chapter 7). For all who have thought for themselves and have come to different

theological conclusions—short shrift. Murder in defense of truth. What is sometimes the modern method?

2. In verse sixteen of Stephen's defense we read that "they were carried over into Shechem and laid in the tomb," whereas in Genesis we read that it was only Joseph's body that was brought back to Shechem. In that verse, too, we read that the tomb was one which Abraham bought of the sons of Hamor, while in Gen. 33.19 and Josh. 24.32 we are told that it was Jacob who bought the tomb. Are the Scriptures inerrant?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How would the king's dainties "defile" Daniel? 2. Is it always right to do what we think is right? 3. Suppose others declare that we are mistaken in our sense of what is right, should we yield to what they advise when we cannot see the matter as they do? 4. What do you do when asked to do something which is against your principles? 5. How does total abstinence benefit the body? 6. How does it benefit the mind? 7. What effect has plain living upon one?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

STEPHEN A CHRISTIAN HERO

Beginning the Lesson. Did you ever see any one throw stones at a cat? Did you see him hit the cat? Did he know that it hurt? What do you think of him? What would you think if you saw *men* throwing stones at a cat? In our lesson story today we see men throwing stones at a man. Why? Who was the man? What had Stephen done? How did he show himself a Christian hero?

How Our Hero Met the False Accusation. His countenance was lighted up with the divine radiance all the while that he was making his defense and afterwards during the stormy scene of his martyrdom. Ships at sea during a cyclone, or circular storm, sometimes come into the calm center round which the storm revolves, and find the water there placid and unruffled; and the sailors call this "the eyes of the hurricane." Stephen was such on that day in the Sanhedrin. When the reverend court became a mob of murderers and rushed upon him with one wild yell, he alone continued calm, and still wore the angel-face.

Stephen Philip de Champaigne

We remember how, on one great occasion in the life of Jesus—the night of his Transfiguration on Mount Hermon—God allowed three of the twelve disciples to see the Redeemer in his glory, and to hear how "well pleased" God was with his "beloved Son," although Jesus was so soon to die upon the cross. And here, in the council hall of the Sanhedrin, God honors the first of his martyrs with the angel-face, to show that it is not true that he has spoken against God, but that God is "well-pleased" with him.—Charles Jerdan, in For the Lambs of the Flock.

The Effect of Stephen's Death upon Paul. Neither the face nor the prayer of the dying man moved him. He plunged forthwith into the work which the murderers of Stephen had begun. But the face and the prayer of Stephen no doubt left a mark on him. He could not forget them. Years afterwards, he told Luke all about them. When Luke says that those who sat in the Council saw Stephen's face "as it had been the face of an angel" he is no doubt quoting the language of Paul. Stephen's face shone as he faced his accusers, and Paul never forgot what a beautiful face it was. It did not soften him, but it haunted him. Nor did he ever forget Stephen's dying prayer, or the long address which preceded it. That address is the most complete discourse reported in the Book of The Acts, and the completeness is due, probably, to the retentive memory of Paul. The prayer which Stephen offered just before his eyes closed in death, lived in Paul's memory forever afterward. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." How could he ever forget that prayer? Those words did not move Paul at the time; they sank into his mind there to remain forever.—Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

Another Christian Martyr. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, was the most celebrated martyr under the persecution of the Emperor Trajan (98-117 A. D.). On his journey to Rome, where he was being taken to be thrown to the wild beasts, he received deputies from various churches and wrote letters to others. In one of these letters, still extant, he wrote: "Welcome nails and cross, welcome broken bones, violence of fierce beasts, wounded limbs and broken body! Welcome all diabolic torture, if I may but obtain Jesus Christ."

Interpreters of God. In a recent sermon, Dr. W. J. Dawson referred to the persistent belief among miners and gold-seekers in what they call the mother lode. When they wash gold in a stream or find nuggets in the rock, they argue that somewhere there is a mother lode, an inexhaustible deposit, of which the gold in the river sand or the nugget in the rock is but the outcropping. From this Dr. Dawson drew the beautiful analogy that when we find the grains of divine gold in human nature we agree that they came from the mother lode of all goodness which is in God. And he instanced Francis of Assisi, pouring out his gentle soul in service to the lepers; Elizabeth Fry, moving like a ray of purest light through the blackness of the Newgate Gaol; the soldier who gives his life for a comrade; the sailor on a sinking ship who yields his chance of rescue to one weaker than himself; the nurse-girl who perishes in a fire that she may rescue a sleeping child.

You remember that the Sanhedrin marveled at the boldness of Peter and John in proclaiming Jesus the Christ, when they were being tried "for a good deed done to an impotent man," and that those bigoted men "took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus!" They had been close to the mother lode of goodness. And it was the Holy Spirit's influence that emboldened Stephen and so filled him with the Spirit of the Master whom he served that all who looked upon him "saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." All these interpret God for us.

Other Christian Heroes. Some one has said that

'Tis as hard at duty's call
To lay one's life down day by day
As to lay it down once for all.

To lay one's life down in unheralded ways is the opportunity of all. On the ordinary levels of ordinary days our way may be as heroic as on the extraordinary heights of extraordinary opportunities which come but seldom.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. There is persecution still: unkind nicknames, and cruel taunts, and ugly sneers, and all sorts of bitter words that burst like blows.

"Beautiful thoughts make a beautiful soul,
And a beautiful soul makes a beautiful face."

A Christian ought to wear the kind of face that it would be worth going two blocks to see.—Moody.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who was Nebuchadnezzar? What does Dan. 1.1 tell us about Daniel? 2. What does "purposed in his heart" mean? 3. Did Daniel's water and plain fare have anything to do with his clear thinking? 4. What is said about self-control in Prov. 16.32; 25.28? 5. What harmful effects has cigarette smoking? 6. Beer drinking? 7. How have you sometimes felt after a hearty Christmas dinner, and what does this show you? 8. Why has diet so large a part in the training for athletic sports?

THE BENEFITS OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE

GOLDEN TEXT: Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank. Daniel 1.8

LESSON Daniel 1.1-20 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 65.9-13

REFERENCE MATERIAL 1 Corinthians 9.24-27

DANIEL 1.8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9 Now God made Daniel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs. 10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces worse looking than the youths that are of your own age? so would ye endanger my head with the king. 11 Then said Daniel to the steward whom the prince of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: 12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. 13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the youths that eat of the king's dainties; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he hearkened unto them in this matter, and proved them ten days. 15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths that did eat of the king's dainties. 16 So the steward took away their dainties, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.

17 Now as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. A HEROIC RESOLVE, verse 8. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, directed one of his officers to take Jewish youths of noble families who were especially fair and bright, and have them enter what has been called "The Princes' College of Babylon." For three years they were to receive education for the civil service. They were to be taught the language and learning of the Chaldeans. They were to be nourished with a portion of the food and wine served to the king himself. Among the youths selected were Daniel and three companions.

Daniel firmly resolved (purposed in his heart) that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties nor with the king's wine.

Keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. "A noble heart-purpose is the strongest watchman over external conduct. It is the purposeless life that has no defenses. A liner with engine power and helm and compass and destination can cut her way through the most tumultuous seas. A liner destitute of helm and compass and errand is at the mercy of every fierce and unfriendly sea. Daniel had the mighty safeguard of 'a purpose true,' and when floods of unfriendly circumstances beset him he held firmly on his course" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

Daniel's resolve was not to eat the king's dainties nor drink his wine.

The chief baker can minister to self-indulgence as well as the chief butler.

The food furnished might have been offered in sacrifice to idols, or it might not have been prepared according to Jewish laws, or it might have been the flesh of animals held by the Jews to be unclean. In the second book of Maccabees, we are told that on the king's birthday Jews were "constrained by bitter constraint to eat of the sacrifices," and that one of the scribes, Eleazer by name, chose rather to be tortured to death, leaving his death for an example of noble courage, and a memorial of value, not only unto young men but unto all the nation. In the same book we are told of seven famous brothers and their mother who preferred death to eating swine's flesh.

"Whatever people may think of you, do what you think to be right" (Pythagoras).

"Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things—in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself" (Susanna Wesley).

Daniel believed it a sacred duty to keep the law recorded in Dt. 12.23, 24; Lev. 11.4-20, and for him, therefore, not to have kept it would have been a sin. "It is

evil for that man who eateth with offense," said Paul. The principle at stake, too, was greater than that of keeping one law alone. The king had changed not only Daniel's food but his dress, his studies, his very name. *Daniel* meant "God is my Judge"; *Belteshazzar,* his new name, meant "May Beltis (a Babylonian goddess) defend the king." Everything was done to make Daniel and his companions forget their nationality and their religion. Had they yielded in the matter of eating meat sacrificed to idols, they would have been renouncing Jehovah their God for the false gods of Babylon.

II. A WISE PLAN, verses 9-13. For himself and three companions Daniel requested of Ashpenaz, the officer in charge, permission to refuse the food given. The latter, though kindly disposed toward Daniel, hesitated to grant his request. "Why should the king compare your faces with those of the other youths and notice in you the effects of lack of proper nourishment?" he said. "The king might think that I had enriched myself with what had been supplied for you, and my life would be forfeited." Daniel, however, had a plan which he knew would not get the officer into trouble, and he now proposed it. "Test us," he said; "let us eat vegetable food (probably beans, peas and lentils) and drink water for a number of days, and then compare our faces with those of the youths who eat the king's dainties."

"Our religion is always being tested in just such practical ways. The world is always asking Christian people to pass examinations. Does our faith make us healthier in body, more vigorous in business, pleasanter people to see and to do with? According to the answer to these questions, the world is impressed favorably or unfavorably" (R. C. Gillie).

III. THE SUCCESS OF THE EXPERIMENT, verses 14-16. The steward yielded to Daniel's request, doubtless with many misgivings. At the end of the time suggested by Daniel, the experiment had succeeded—the steward found the four youths heavier and fairer than those who ate the king's food. "That was to be expected, though the steward was surprised. Quite apart from the facts of hygiene, a good conscience and a contented mind promote digestion. It is not so much the amount you eat as the way you digest it that makes your food do you good. Daniel was on sound lines from the point of view of both morals and hygiene. How we should like to have been present at the 'sports day' that tested the four! High jump, mile race, endurance test, weight test, sight, hearing, coördination, nerve tests—what was the use of the other youths competing?" (Emily Huntley).

"If I could only convert the Englishman from his belief in beer and beef to one in sunlight and milk I should die happy" (Dr. Saleeby).

Daniel and his friends were put permanently on their simple diet.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (Paul).

IV. PLAIN LIVING AND HIGH THINKING, verses 17-20. God gave the four youths knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: they were industrious students, but the gift came none the less from God, as do all good things. And Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams: see chapter 2. When all the youths were summoned to his presence the king found these four Hebrews the best of them all, and they were therefore given positions which involved personal attendance upon him.

"When they stood in front of him, clean, straight, strong, unsullied, undaunted, unafraid, men who had their principles, and who had shown that they were willing to live and to die for them, he said at once, 'These are the men for whom I have been waiting.' Their fidelity brought them power, popularity, success. It brings that to most men, and it is what the world seeks" (Dr. Robert E. Speer).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Book of Daniel. The book takes its name from that of the hero. It consists of two distinct portions: the first part, in narrative form, contains a series of stories about Daniel or his companions; the second part, in prophetic form, contains a series of visions of Daniel.

How Daniel Came to Babylon. It was in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign (606 B.C.) that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, first besieged Jerusalem and carried back to Babylon Jewish captives, together with some of the treasure of the temple. Among the captives were Daniel and the three other youths of our lesson.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Babylon, the capital of Babylonia, the greatest city in the ancient world, was on the Euphrates River. At the time when Daniel was brought to the city it was already very ancient. Its huge walls were three hundred feet high, and a hundred brazen gates gave entrance to the city. Its Hanging Gardens were one of the Seven Wonders

Ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's Palace, Babylon

of the ancient world, and its great temple of Bel was grander than any of the other ancient temples. The site of Babylon was long covered to a depth of fifty feet in places by soil brought down upon it by the river. In comparatively recent years German archæologists have dug through to the foundations of the ancient city. The very palace of Nebuchadnezzar is unearthed; each brick in it is stamped with his name and royal title in cuneiform script.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

This is a temperance lesson, but because of the text which is its basis, it should not be limited to "temperance" in the commonly accepted use of the term. It may be treated as a lesson upon the evils of alcoholic drinking, gluttony, and all that weakens mind or body. Preferably may it be treated as a lesson upon the benefits of simple living and high thinking.

Self-control is commonly thought of as the power of controlling one's weak tendencies, the force that avoids evil. Self-control means also control of one's good tendencies, the putting into effect of one's powers for good. The wisest training in most classes will be to make pupils conscious of their strength rather than of their weakness.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
SOME BENEFITS OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE

Beginning the Lesson. Daniel is one of the rare Old Testament characters without guile; no sins graven on his escutcheon, as Shakespeare's words—"a Daniel come to judgment"—testify. In him we have an example of steadfast fidelity to the dictates of conscience, no matter what the consequences might be; of perfect

self-control and of unflinching courage—"Dare to be a Daniel" has become a proverb; and of sublime faith in God and tranquil trust in his overruling care.

Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank. Why did he object to the king's dainties? What did he ask to be given instead? With what result?

The King's Dainties. Athenæus, who lived about 200 A. D., calls the animals that were served at the tables of the Persian kings *victims,* because they were first offered as victims to their gods, and further says that the Persian kings (the Persian Empire succeeded the Babylonian) were accustomed to order the food left at their own tables delivered to their courtiers.

Canon Tristram quotes from an old Latin book by a Dutch traveler this description of a dinner of the Shah of Persia two hundred and fifty years ago:—

There were neither chairs nor tables, and the guests sat in semicircles, so that all should face the sovereign. The first semicircle comprised only the highest dignitaries and foreign ministers. The Shah's courtiers occupied the second rank, and so on, till the hindmost places were filled by the youths in training for the public service. The dishes were brought in, and after the sovereign was served, they were passed on through the long rows until six hundred attendants had feasted, all sitting on the carpets, and at each fresh dish they prostrated themselves before their lord. No one about the court was allowed to buy any food, or eat anything but what came from the Shah's stores, as to do so would be to signify that his hospitality was scanty.

We can easily see that if the arrangements at the court of Nebuchadnezzar were like the later Persian fashion, to eat the food offered publicly to an idol and then passed on, would have been a direct act of idol homage.

The Benefit of Total Abstinence. Nothing is more absolutely proved than that total abstinence from alcohol and simplicity of diet, are the best methods of obtaining health of body and strength of brain. The pages of history are filled with the records of noble and useful lives, richly gifted, which have been rendered powerless by indulgence in liquor and food, whilst lives with comparatively few gifts have become mighty in their benefit to the race, because the soul held the appetites of the body under perfect control. Happy would it be for the world if all the young people who study Daniel's example would follow it, and resolve that "I like" shall always wait upon "I choose." Resolve to live without the king's dainties, and determine to eat and drink in such quantities and of such quality as will help to make the best output of life.—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

Keeping Fit. When we asked Tom Gibbons out at Shelby to outline his training diet the first thing he said was this:

"Well, I drink a lot of water,—no tea or coffee, no tobacco, milk now and then, simple food,—steaks, chops, eggs, potatoes, etc.,—and a lot of water."

We asked Dempsey the same question. Curiously enough, he began his answer in the same fashion:

"Well, I drink a lot of water,—a little tea or coffee,—not too much,—no tobacco, simple food, and fattening dishes, that keep me from taking off too much weight."

So a "lot of water" seems to be the basis for physical conditioning. A "lot of water" is a great thing for the stomach and the system in general, and yet not many ever follow this program.

The average citizen drinks water only when he is thirsty,—not at regular intervals for the practical purpose of keeping fit.

No sermon is intended, but a "lot of water" for the health-making purposes has it all over a lot of wine, a lot of beer, a lot of coffee or a lot of tea, also a lot of etherized gin or doctored hootch.—Grantland Rice, in The New York Tribune.

Benefits of Temperance.

Though I look old yet I am strong and lusty,
For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood;
Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo
The means of weakness and debility;
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
Frosty but kindly. —As You Like It.

A College Man's Resolve. To steer clear of dissipation, and guard my health and body and peace of mind as a most precious stock in trade. To take a good grip on the joys of life, to play the game like a man. To fight against nothing so

hard as against my own weakness and endeavor to grow in strength a gentleman, a Christian.

Courage of Convictions. Are we going to be trimmers, compromisers, evaders, men who conceal our deepest life, our truest convictions, whom other men can frown down, or laugh out of our loyalties? Are we going to be like that, or are we going to stand by our convictions throughout life?

Some of us can remember how Mr. Moody often had us sing:

Dare to be a Daniel!
Dare to stand alone!
Dare to have a purpose true!
Dare to make it known!

Well, dare we? O men, dare we anything else than to see with clear, unblinking eyes the right, and to cleave to that right by day and night until the end?

And yet there is one deeper word than this. We must get back of all mere deliberation, choice of principles and high resolutions, to do the right thing, to live the truth, and to walk in cleanness, honor and love; we must go back of all these willings and resolvings of our own lives to something deeper, richer, and more penetrating and powerful, even to the indwelling of our lives by One who is stronger than we, who is the assurance of the inevitable victory.—Dr. Robert E. Speer.

For Discussion. 1. Alcohol and efficiency.

2. Simple diet and physical and mental vigor.

Questions to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What must have been Philip's thoughts when impelled to leave his prosperous work of evangelization in Samaria? 2. How do you think Philip was divinely led in this interview? 3. Are men similarly led by God today? 4. Who was the first Gentile convert, and to what race did he belong?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
A SOUND MIND IN A SOUND BODY

Beginning the Lesson. On the door or window of a restaurant in Jewish quarters may be seen the word *Kosher* in English or Hebrew letters; it means that all the food there served has been prepared according to the strict requirements of the ancient law. Let us turn to Deuteronomy 12.23, 24 and Leviticus 11.4-20 to see what was forbidden the ancient Israelites.

When a Hebrew youth named Daniel was taken a captive to Babylon he was one of several young men selected for a high position in King Nebuchadnezzar's court. Three years of training were before him, during which he was to be fed with the king's dainties and wine, food which was forbidden by the laws which had hedged his childhood. He purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself therewith. Only the young man's "No" stood between him and the power of the great monarch, yet the "No" won the day. How?

A Sound Mind in a Sound Body. Daniel was strong physically. You admire an athlete, a fellow who can race and wrestle and run and jump, and do all such things. We have no story of any great physical feat by Daniel—he did not, like Samson or David, slay wild beasts or giants. But we know that he had a fine, healthy body as a youth, and if he had been a weakling as a man he could not have stood all that he had to endure.

He was strong mentally. This again appeals to you. You like a fellow with brains, who is clever, can master lessons, solve problems, and carry off prizes at school and university. Daniel was that type of man. He was capable, keen, far-seeing, clever, able to solve riddles that puzzled all the wise men in the realm. He had a strong, healthy mind in a strong, healthy body.

He was strong spiritually. You admire the fellow who can control himself and say "No!" when tempted to do anything that is wrong. Such a man was Daniel. He had courage and faith; he was true to God, to conscience and conviction even in the face of ruin and death. Daniel was strong all around, in body, mind and soul.

How did Daniel gain such strength? *By industry.* It is said of Daniel and his companions that they had skill and knowledge, and that in them they were ten times better than anybody else in the Kingdom. They could not have attained to this without working. If they had loafed, idled upon the corner, given up to every pleasure, they never would have become such men.

By self-denial. Daniel could have lived as the king lived, could have had all the daintics, luxuries and wines of the king's table. But he knew they would not be good for him. They would have made him grow gross and lazy, would have given him a mind dull and sleepy. So he denied himself these things, lived the simple life. Gluttony and drinking are enemies of the body and mind. You must deny yourself if you would excel in strength of intellect or body.

By devotion. He kept close to God. He never forgot his country or his faith. Three times a day his window was open towards Jerusalem and before it he knelt down to pray. Not even the king could stop him from doing this, although he tried. How? Other people tried—with what result? God was more to Daniel than any king. Do you wonder that he had spiritual strength?

There are strong men who are hustling, bullying fellows, who crush others in order to get their own way. There are strong men who can lift heavy weights and break bars of iron with their hands. But to have the threefold strength that Daniel possessed one must do as Daniel did, exercise self-denial, be industrious, above all, secure the strength that comes from communion with God.

Let them Give us Water to Drink. Why do we drink? Because our bodies are walking aquariums, and we have to keep the protoplasm of our cells swimming in water or it will not live. As long as we drink only water, there is little danger of our taking too much—except by drowning ourselves; but when we begin to mix things with it, trouble begins. Certainly on general principles it would appear that the simplest, cheapest, and most rational thing would be to take our necessary daily three pints of water "straight," without mixture of any sort—clear, fresh, and sparkling from the spring; but for some strange reason, man has never been satisfied to do this, but must add something to the water before he will call it a drink. And he doesn't appear to have been particularly lucky in his additions.

A large part of our drinking water has always been taken in the form of mixtures with other substances. These beverages are always much more expensive than plain water, often quite troublesome to secure and prepare, and injurious in excess. Why they should ever have come into such universal use, in all races and in all ages of the world, is one of the standing puzzles of human nature.—Dr. Woods Hutchinson.

A True Statement. A colored man was being examined for life insurance. The examiner said to him, "Do you drink alcoholic liquors?"

The man replied, "No, I can't say I does and I can't say I doesn't. But I never done drink to success."

He wanted to use the word "excess," of course, but his statement was certainly true. No one ever does drink to success, but many do drink to failure.

The Effect of Smoking upon Mind and Body. "Dr. McKeever studied one hundred boys ranging from twelve to twenty years of age, all of whom were smokers. He found that the beat-record of the smoker's heart was similar to that of a very tired person, that it responded to the influence of a smoke for a brief time, but that this inspiring period passed sometimes in less than fifteen minutes. In 1897 at Yale, Dr. Seaver made a thorough study of the matter and found that of the hundred highest ranking students five were smokers and ninety-five were abstainers, although of the student body sixty per cent were smokers. Dr. Meylan studied the same problem with the students at Columbia University, and came to these conclusions: 1. All scientists are agreed that the use of tobacco by adolescents is injurious. 2. It has been shown conclusively that the use of tobacco by college students is closely associated with idleness, lack of ambition, lack of application, and low scholarship."

Keeping Fit. I want the boys and girls to know that we are not living only under the "Thou shalt not" of the Old Testament, but that we are living also under the "Thou shalt" of the New Testament; that we are not only living under the law, but that we live also under grace. We want our message to contain not merely "Thou shalt not drink," "Thou shalt not be a bootlegger," "Thou shalt not break the law," but the greater word—"Thou shalt be fit," "Thou shalt be free," "Thou shalt have life more abundantly."

Some years ago, I was with a group of friends in Switzerland, and for two weeks we climbed the mountain peaks and glaciers. We heard the song of the stars at night and saw the sun rise over the Alps. To climb happily, to be without fatigue, to sleep a few brief hours on the mountain top and then to be off in the mists of the dawn for higher peaks, to keep steady, with crevasses on either side as we marched over those glaciers—this meant bodily fitness. It was a great and won-

derful experience, and there was not one of us who did not gladly ration herself to be better fit for the mountain work. If it were right and wise to be fit for the glory and joy of mountain climbing, to accept the challenge of those glaciers, surely it must be right and wise to be fit to accept the challenge of every day.—Mrs. Raymond Robins, in Law versus Lawlessness.

In Training for Victory.

No action, whether foul or fair,
Is ever done, but it leaves somewhere
A record written by fingers ghostly,
As a blessing or a curse, and mostly
In the greater weakness or greater strength
Of the acts which follow it.

These words of Longfellow tell us that no act is without its influence upon other acts, each defeat makes easy another defeat, and each victory makes easy another victory. When the Duke of Wellington declared that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the cricket-field at Eton, he meant that when the soldiers were schoolboys they were in training for the great victory which they were to win in manhood. Daniel refused the king's wine and meat, and his steady adherence to right principle gave him the courage he possessed when he entered the lion's den.

"Every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things," declared Paul. Without a murmur he abides by the restrictions of his training. Not once will he break the trainer's rules, and he is proud of the privations and hardships to which he submits, and counts it a point of honor to abstain from anything that might in the slightest degree diminish his chance of success, for his heart is set upon winning the game.

"The pitcher who smokes gives away the game," writes the President of Leland Stanford University. "The punter who dances loses the goal, the sprinter who takes a convivial glass of beer breaks no record. His record breaks him. Some day we shall realize that the game of life is more strenuous than the game of football, more intricate than pitching curves, more difficult than punting. We shall keep in trim for it. We must remember training rules. The rules that win the football game are good also for success in business. Half the strength of young America is wasted in the dissipation of drinking or smoking. If we keep the training rules of life in literal honesty, we shall win a host of prizes that otherwise we would lose. Final success goes to the few, alas, who through life keep mind and soul and body clean."

Tesla's Training for Self-Mastery. Nikola Tesla, the distinguished electrician, tells an interesting story in the Scientific American of the way he trained himself to do the thing he set out to do.

When he was a boy only seven or eight years of age, he read a tale which deeply impressed him with the possibilities of will power and self-control. Straightway he began to discipline himself.

"Had I a sweet cake or a juicy apple which I was dying to eat," he says, "I would give it to another boy and go through the tortures of Tantalus, pained but satisfied. Had I some task before me which was exhausting, I would attack it again and again until it was done. So I practised day by day from morning till night. At first it called for vigorous mental effort directed against disposition and desire; but, as years went by, the conflict lessened, and my wish and will became one. They are so today, and in this lies the secret of whatever success I have achieved."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Far from me be the gift of Bacchus—pernicious, inflaming wine, that weakens both body and mind.—Homer.

Bodily enjoyment depends upon health and health depends upon temperance.—Thales.

"Drinking makes thinking impossible; some day thinking will make drinking impossible."

Refrain from drink which is the source of all evil.—George Washington.

No form of deterioration today more surely handicaps boys than the cigarette habit.—Frances Willard.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who was Philip? 2. What brought him to Samaria, and what did he accomplish there? 3. What sent him southward? 4. Why? 5. How would you answer Philip's question? 6. Why do you attend our Church-school?

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN TREASURER

GOLDEN TEXT: The opening of thy words giveth light. Psalm 119.130

LESSON Acts 8.26-39 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 53.7-12

ACTS 8.26 But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. 27 And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship; 28 and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31 And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this,

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,
So he openeth not his mouth:
33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away:
His generation who shall declare?
For his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other? 35 And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, *here* is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. WIRELESS IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM, verses 26-29. To Philip (like Stephen one of the seven deacons appointed to relieve the apostles in their work), came the commission to go southward toward Gaza. Our text says that "an angel of the Lord" gave him this commission, but this does not tell us who was the messenger thus chosen. "A vision, a dream, a human agent, some natural circumstance or instrument, all these are in Holy Scripture or in contemporary literature styled God's angels or messengers. Men saw then more deeply than we do, recognized the hand of a Superintending Providence where we behold only secondary agents, and in their filial confidence spoke of angels where we should only recognize some natural power."

"The whole topic of angelic agencies has been much confused for us by the popular notions about angels. When men speak or think of angelic appearances, they think of angels as they are depicted in sacred pictures. The conception of young men clad in long white and shining garments, with beautiful wings dependent from their shoulders and folded by their sides, is an idea of the angels and angelic life derived from mediæval painters and sculptors, not from Holy Writ. The important point, however, for us to remember is that Philip here moved under external direction to the conversion of the Ethiopian" (G. T. Stokes).

Philip obeyed the divine compulsion, and met a man of great authority, the treasurer of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was returning from Jerusalem where he had been to worship. Candace was not a proper name, but was, like the name Pharaoh in Egypt, or Cæsar in Rome, the title of the ruler. Tradition gives this "man of Ethiopia" the name of Indich, and Irenæus and Eusebius make him the founder of Christianity in Arabia Felix and Ethiopia. Since he had been worshiping in the temple at Jerusalem he was either a Jew or a proselyte, a heathen converted to Judaism. When Philip saw him he was sitting in his chariot reading the prophet Isaiah.

"Pondering the great blessing of salvation which came to this officer, we are first arrested by the fact of his readiness for the blessing. There were attention, predisposition, sympathy, expectation. All high blessing is ours as we wait in a certain state of preparedness, ripeness, susceptibility, and desire" (Dr. W. L. Watkinson).

II. A BIBLE LESSON, verses 30-35. The Spirit bade Philip approach the chariot, and he obeyed. Evan Roberts, the Welsh evangelist, often counseled his people to "Bend to the Spirit." In this adventure Philip bent his will to the Spirit. The man was reading aloud, as was the way with Orientals. Jewish rabbis taught

that what was read aloud would be remembered, and they often insisted upon this practice. It is still the custom in Oriental lands to read aloud, even though alone.

"Understandest thou what thou readest?" Philip questioned. A commentator points out that there is a play upon the sound here: the Greek words are *ginoskeis,* understandest, and *anaginoskeis,* readest. "Do you heed, what you read?"

"The Spirit had led Philip, but there was room for human initiative. How was the stranger's interest to be aroused? By some challenging word. This mingling of the divine impulse and the human judgment is worth noting from time to time. Impulses come from on high and from within, but we have to use our ordinary faculties to know how to obey. God still gives people what the Quakers call a 'concern,' but we have to think out for ourselves the method" (R. C. Gillie).

"How can I, except some one shall guide me?" the treasurer returned, and at once invited Philip to enter his chariot and sit with him.

"How can any soul travel through life by the aid of a map which he does not understand?" (The Youth's Companion).

The passage which the treasurer was reading was Isaiah 53.7, 8. The quotation as we have it in The Acts is from the Greek Version. Our Revised Version, a translation of the Hebrew, gives a plainer meaning: He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due?

"Of whom speaketh the prophet thus?" the treasurer asked. "The earlier Jewish authorities all understood chapter fifty-three of Isaiah to refer to the coming Messiah; the later Jewish writers treat it either as a composition of Jeremiah or Josiah, and as referring to the writer himself, or as fulfilled in and by the sufferings inflicted upon the Jewish nation as a nation" (Dr. Lyman Abbott). "Now Hebrew scholars generally regard 'the servant of the Lord,' in the latter part of Isaiah, as the devout and faithful Israel in times of persecution. But the famous prophecy contains much deeper truths than their experiences could illustrate. Although it may well be that the writer only had these people in mind, his inspired utterance went beyond them, and never completely realized its signification till Jesus came and suffered and died. After this his disciples saw the perfect application of the prophecy to the Christ's atoning death. Apparently it had never been so interpreted before. But now the key exactly fits the lock" (Dr. Walter F. Adeney).

"The way to receive good instruction is to ask good questions."

And Philip opened his mouth—this is a Hebrew expression indicating that the words uttered were not spoken by chance but with deliberate purpose—and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. Doubtless he told the Ethiopian how Jesus had fulfilled the prophecy, and how by his death he had provided a way of salvation for all who accepted him.

"Does the Providence of God often bring us within hailing distance of another? Are you seeking the light, conscious of a want? Remember God's promises, if you are in earnest. 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst,' 'Every one that seeketh findeth.' Or are you a Philip, an expert in the way of Christ? If so, should you meet one who is groping for light and hungry for the true bread, you can tell him straightway of Christ. Do you know the way so well that you can show it to some one else and send him away rejoicing?" (Dr. Maltbie Babcock).

III. A CONVERT, verses 36-39. "Faith within and water without were ready," as Bengel says, and the Ethiopian asked to be baptized when they reached a pool. Jesus himself said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Philip gladly baptized this Gentile, a Negro, and then just as he had been divinely led to go toward Gaza, so now was he led by divine prompting to go quickly to Azotus. As he passed through village after village he preached everywhere that "This Jesus is the Christ." The Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing and on arriving home, as Eusebius reports, he evangelized his countrymen.

Every Christian has had the not infrequent experience of being literally impelled to go and do some good deed, and has afterwards experienced a happiness comparable to that of Philip over his convert to whom he was

led by God. The angel of the Lord still speaks to hearts that are willing to obey. "It is a quick journey that we have to make through this world, and we shall not pass this way again. If we are to help any of our fellow travelers we shall have to avoid the habit of procrastination. The only really convenient season for helping any of them is at this moment, when their path crosses ours."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing Upon the Lesson. Who was Philip? What sort of man was he? Where had Jesus bade his followers witness for him? Until Stephen's martyrdom, where only had they borne witness?

Witnessing in Samaria. Five years or more had passed, and still the followers of Christ tarried in Jerusalem, unmindful of the command to evangelize Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth. But the great persecution which followed the death of Stephen led to the scattering of the disciples. A young Pharisee named Saul was foremost in this persecution; armed with a commission from the high priest, he visited every house where there were known to be followers of Jesus, and seizing both men and women, thrust them into prison, there to be beaten and otherwise tortured if they refused to give up their allegiance to their Lord.

Candace of Ethiopia, with Captives of War From a Sepulchral Pyramid

Upon Philip, another of the Seven appointed to help the apostles in the work of the Church, seems to have fallen the mantle of Stephen. He went to the city of Samaria and proclaimed unto them the Christ. He found the fields white unto harvest; multitudes heeded his words and believed, and there was much joy in that city.

Could it be possible that the Kingdom of God was to include the despised Samaritans? The apostles wondered, and they sent Peter and John to investigate the amazing work in Samaria. The two were satisfied that the purpose of God was being carried out and gave their sanction and encouragement to the movement by praying for the people and laying their hands upon them. On their way back to Jerusalem, Peter and John themselves preached the Gospel in many villages of Samaria. Thus were Samaritans brought into the Kingdom of God.

For the incident connected with Simon the Sorcerer, read Acts 8.9-13, 18-24.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The great highway from Egypt northward passed near *Gaza*, which in early Hebrew times was a Philistine town and famous as the scene of some of Samson's exploits. It was on the coast, some fifty miles southwest of Jerusalem.

Great cities once flourished in Central Africa, in the country now known as the Soudan. The name of *Ethiopia* was given to all Africa south of Egypt. In the northern part of Ethiopia, between the two rivers which unite to form the Blue Nile, was the kingdom called Meroe by the Romans. This kingdom was ruled by queens whose royal title was Candace. It was doubtless from this kingdom that the queen's officer, a full-blooded African, had journeyed down the Nile Valley, across the Isthmus, up the coast-road to Gaza, and then over the hill country to Jerusalem.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The man has the Word, but not the clue. He has the Scriptures, but he had no interpreter. What is needed? He needs some messenger in whom the Word has become life, and who has discovered the central secret of the Scriptures in the companionship of the Lord. Philip explained to him the Word, and through the Word led him unto the Lord. And that is your privilege, Sunday-school teacher, when you meet your pupils in the class. You are appointed by the Lord to light up

words that will burn in your scholars' minds to the very end of the pilgrim way.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE USE OF THE BIBLE IN EVANGELISM

Beginning the Lesson. Some one has told this story of the French Quaker, Stephen Grellet.

One day he felt strongly impressed that it was his duty to enter a certain forest in Canada and preach a sermon. He obeyed the impulse, but on arriving at the appointed forest, could discover no audience whatever. However, he acted upon the command that had been impressed upon him, and delivered a sermon, apparently to the forest trees. Years afterwards he was accosted by a man who told him that he had been hiding at that place, intent on robbery; and, to his intense astonishment, had heard a sermon which was the means of his conversion.

This story is somewhat similar to our story about Philip. Philip, however, had the advantage of talking directly to the one whom he was sent to teach, though when he started toward the South he did not know why he was impelled to take this journey nor whom he was to meet. There was the Ethiopian and his need; there was Philip and his ability to answer that need; and there was God who brought them together.

Ethiopians as Suppliants From the Egyptian Monuments
(The first cut shows their color)

Listening to the Spirit of the Lord. Let us notice how busy the Spirit of the Lord is with the evangelist Philip. The Spirit is the busiest Worker in the narrative. He is like the mysterious Ariel in Shakespeare's "Tempest," working invisibly here, there, and everywhere. First, he gives Philip general guidance. "Arise, and go toward the South." He creates a certain trend or tendency in the life. He starts us upon journeys whose precise endings are still unknown. Then, he gives Philip particular guidance. "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot."

If I, too, would have the constant guidance of the Spirit, three things are needful:—(1) I must keep sensitive toward God. To this end I must pray and praise without ceasing. (2) I must listen for his voice. His voice is always "the upward calling." I must hearken to my conscience, and to the quiet whisperings in my soul. (3) I must obey the voice. Every time I obey I improve my organ of hearing, and the Spirit can tell me deeper secrets.—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in The Sunday School Chronicle.

The Use of the Bible in Evangelism. When Nicholas I became Emperor of Russia, his first task was to put down a formidable sedition among the aristocracy of his realm. Many nobles were suspected of guilt and thrown into prison. One, who was innocent, was by nature a man of fiery temper; his wrongful arrest infuriated him, and he raved like a wild animal. Day after day, brooding over his treatment, he would stamp shrieking through his cell, and curse the emperor, and curse God. Why did God not prevent this injustice?

A clergyman visited him in his cell and left a Bible, which he begged him to read. As soon as the wrtier was gone, the angry nobleman kicked the Bible into a corner. What to him was the Word of a God who let tyrants abuse him? But the terrible loneliness and desperation of his situation at last drove him to read the Book. He read it because he could do nothing else, and then he became interested and began to study it, and to commit whole chapters to memory. The story of the Savior's life and death totally changed him. He saw himself a fellow-sufferer with the Christ who was unjustly accused and slain.

Revengeful rage gave way, and the spirit of the martyr took its place. The shadows of wrong and death vanished in the new light that shone upon him from

beyond. The company of a Book—the one Book in all the world that could have done it—had given the proud noble another heart.

At his trial he was unable to prove his innocence, and was sentenced to death. When the jailer's key unlocked his cell, instead of the messenger of death whom he expected, the Czar of Russia stood before him. A conspirator's intercepted letter had placed the innocence of the suspected nobleman beyond question, and the Czar had come to make what amends he could.

Since then the life of the nobleman has passed away, but the fruits of his devout fidelity and kindness among his fellowmen, the hospital he built for the sick and friendless, and the very Bible he was shut up with in his distress, still bear witness to a consecration that was worth all its personal cost.—Adapted from The Youth's Companion.

The Unofficial Witness. The influence for good that the ordinary Christian layman can wield in foreign lands is often enormous. An English army doctor was once stationed somewhere in the Mohammedan East. He knew only the least smattering of Arabic and could hardly issue orders to his black Sudanese servant, who was a Mohammedan. The Mohammedans, by the way, are considered as hopeless subjects for conversion. The doctor, however, was a genuine Christian; he kept his Bible and other religious books always by his camp bed, and he used them daily. His habits of prayer were as regular as any Mohammedan's, and he appeared to have derived from them an imperturbable temper and a sunny disposition.

One day he gave his black servant a copy of the Gospel in his own tongue. That was all, but it was enough. Beside the written Gospel was the living commentary, and the black servant was not slow to compare the two. Eventually he offered himself for Christian baptism.

The story closes for us in a memorable scene. A farewell meeting is going on in a room full of Moslem converts, some Egyptian, some Syrian. It is in honor of the young Sudanese who is about to start for Arabia, there to witness for Christ in the land of Mohammed himself—a triumph of unofficial missionary enterprise!—The Youth's Companion.

Understandest Thou What Thou Readest? This pious Ethiopian pilgrim was not the last person to have difficulty in understanding the Scriptures. From that day to this people all over the world have needed the assistance of interpreters and of preaching in their study of the Word of God.

The first step in bringing the gospel message to people of a foreign race is to give them the Bible in their native language. Thus did the Roman people receive the gospel directly from Greek and Hebrew missionaries. And thus, in turn, did our European and British ancestors come into possession of the Word of God from Rome—first through the Latin language and later by direct translation from the Hebrew and the Greek. In the same way missionaries of the present day are translating the Bible from their own language, whatever this may be, into the native tongues of every foreign field—Asia, Africa, America, and the islands of the sea.

Eventually, however, when Christian education develops sufficiently in each field, native scholars will revise these first translations and give to their people in each case a new and better version of the Bible, made directly from the original languages in which the Scriptures were first written. Meanwhile the languages of the mission fields will themselves undergo a change under the stimulating influence of Christian teaching and of constant intercourse with the modern world. This fact will be an added urgent reason for future translations in Hindu, Chinese, Tagalog, Zulu, and the multitude of other tongues of native races and tribes in all parts of the world. It is this constant change of every living spoken language which likewise necessitates occasional revisions of the Bible in the languages of the more enlightened people of the Western world, including America.

Formerly the English-speaking peoples of North America were dependent for their Bible translations on Great Britain. This was most natural in the colonial days of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and perhaps also during the subsequent first period of rapid expansion and material development of the United States. But it could not continue forever. The language of the cosmopolitan people of America could not possibly develop in exactly the same way as that of their more homogeneous English cousins, three thousand miles away. Moreover, the material development of their country eventually made leisure and study possible for a sufficient number of people to produce a native scholarship capable of preparing a Bible for America. Such an American Bible would naturally be based in part upon earlier English versions but, more especially and directly, also upon

the original Hebrew and Greek in which the Old and New Testaments were first written. It would be rendered in the most approved English of the dictionaries made and used in America, as other English dictionaries are made and more widely used in Great Britain.—Dr. Henry H. Meyer, in The Sunday School Journal.

Interpreting the Bible. When Philip jumped into the Ethiopian's chariot and interpreted the words of Isaiah to him, they glowed with a new meaning for his listener. And yet Philip did not talk about Isaiah and his times. As Samuel M. Crowthers rightly infers, Philip's heart and mind were too full of what had been happening in Jerusalem. "He told of his own spiritual experiences and of what had taken place within his own knowledge. Then he read from the old book and said, 'This is what these words mean.' The past is dead till it lives again in the present experience. Then it comes again in spiritual beauty and power. You do not understand the Bible when you read it merely as the record of what happened to other men who long ago have done their work and passed away. But some day you have a vivid experience of your own. You know the meaning of temptation, of contrition, of self-sacrifice. You have a sense of divine reality. Then you take up the old book and it flashes light upon this experience of yours. You understand what it means."

For Discussion. 1. The great problem is not how to save the world, but how to persuade each Christian that it is his business to be the means of saving some one man in the world.—Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst.

2. The Gospel is addressed to individuals. Its purpose is the salvation of men. All successful preaching talks to individuals.—Phillips Brooks.

Man lumps his kind in the mass,
God singles them unit by unit.—Browning.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was Paul so zealous in his persecution of believers? 2. How may Paul have been gradually prepared for his sudden conversion? 3. What is conversion, and how may one know that he has been converted? 4. Why do most conversions occur between ten and twenty? 5. How widely different were the conversions of the four recorded in Acts 16: Timothy, Lydia, the fortune-telling girl, and the jailer? 6. Contrast Ananias and Jonah.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
HOW PHILIP WON THE ETHIOPIAN

Beginning the Lesson. Dr. Robert E. Speer says that the shortest and simplest description of the work of missions is in three words: Making Jesus known. Those three words exactly describe what Philip did in Samaria and on his way to Gaza. To what city did Philip belong? What led him to go to Samaria?

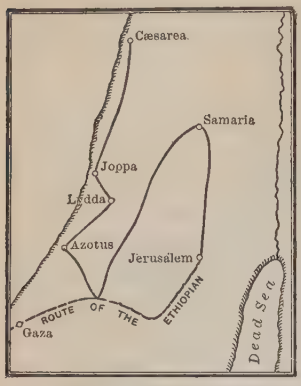
How Philip Won the Ethiopian. Who was Philip? He was one of the seven; and who were they? You remember how the Church chose seven men to care for the poor so as to leave the apostles free to think only of their preaching. Stephen the martyr was one of them, and Philip was another. If the rest were like these two, they must have been a fine group of men. Philip was not an apostle, or as we should say, a minister, at all. He was just a layman, but that did not keep him from preaching and trying to win others to Christ.

When Philip had to leave Jerusalem because of persecution he found a fine opportunity for preaching in Samaria, the country of the woman of the well to whom Jesus talked, and of the Good Samaritan in Jesus's parable; the country that would not give Jesus a night's lodging and therefore John wished to call down upon the people fire from heaven. In Samaria Philip was preaching to large crowds when the Spirit of God said to him one day, "You must leave here and go to a desert place." Philip must have been much surprised at such a direction, but he did not question nor argue. He went at once. The rest of the beautiful story you know: What is it?

Thus Philip, you see, was the first to preach the Gospel in Samaria, and the first to win for Christ and baptize a heathen convert. He showed the Early Church that it had an immense field of service open to it—the whole Gentile world. He was quite unaware of the importance and far-reaching influence of his actions. He was simply doing his duty, and knew nothing of the great results that were to come from his faithfulness.

After this "the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip," our text says, meaning that

at God's bidding he went on to Cæsarea. There he stayed the rest of his life. Twenty years later Paul came and received a hearty welcome in his house from Philip himself and his four daughters who were active church workers.



Map Showing Philip's Journeys

The Missionary Spirit. In the spring, long before the leaves come on the maple trees, something else comes on all the boughs and twigs. They look like little wings, coming out two by two, and after a while they drop from the trees and go spinning down to earth. They are the seeds of the maple, and the tree is giving them wings so that the winds may blow them here and there, and scatter them over the ground,—it may be for yards and yards outside of the widest circle of the tree.

The maple does not clothe itself first. It does not get so busy dressing itself up in the spring finery of its new leaves that it forgets all about its seed, and only says as an after-thought,—"Oh, dear, I have been so busy that I never thought of it at all, and now it is too late!" No,—every year, and always dependably, the maple makes its seeds first, and gives them wings and sends them out. It is thinking of the days and years which are going to be. It must provide other little trees so that when the big maple is gone there will be other trees to take its place.

People who are really blessing God for all Christian privileges which he has given them, must be like the maple tree. Just as when the spring sap rises in the maple, the first thing it does is to make the seeds that shall plant other maple trees, so, when there thrills in us some new joy or gratitude for health or wealth or happiness, which God has given us, we shall want to share it. We shall want to be missionary Christians and belong to missionary churches. We shall show our gladness for what we have by giving of our best, that others may have it too.—W. Russell Bowie, in The Armor of Youth.

Ready for the Guide. A missionary in Canada once looked up from his desk where he was writing to see his room filled with Indians. They had entered so quietly that he had not heard them coming. He asked them whence they came. "We came a distance of fourteen nights," they answered, for they reckoned distance by the number of nights on the way. "We have the Great Book which we can read, but we can not understand it." He asked them what missionary had taught them to read, and they replied that they had never seen a missionary. They lived in the Hudson Bay region, hundreds of miles away from the nearest missionary station, but their hunting grounds adjoined those of Christian Indians, and from them they had heard about the Great Book. "They read and explained it to us," said these men, "and last winter we all learned to read, every one in our village." The missionary could scarcely believe that they had learned to read without a white teacher, but when he opened the book, which they had obtained from an agent of the Hudson Bay Company, he found their words were true, they could read easily and correctly. Like the Ethiopian treasurer, they wanted a guide, and they had traveled a distance of fourteen nights over the snow to find one.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Every disciple must be a discipler.—Dr. A. J. Gordon.

Not thine, nor mine, to question or reply
When he commands us, asking "How?" or "Why?"
He knows the cause, his ways are wise and just,
Who serves the King must serve with perfect trust.—Dr. Van Dyke.

There is no book that will repay time spent upon its pages as will the Word of God.—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the accounts of his conversion which Paul himself gives in Acts 22.6-11 and 26.9-19. 2. What effect upon Paul do you think the death of Stephen had? 3. What does it mean to be converted? 4. Compare the conversion of Paul and the conversion of the Ethiopian. 5. The whole secret of his after-life Paul gives in the words of Acts 26.19: what are they? 6. Is the Ananias of our lesson the Ananias who was a hypocrite of Lesson III?

SAUL BECOMES A CHRISTIAN

GOLDEN TEXT: If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.
2 Corinthians 5.17

LESSON Acts 9.1-19 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 32.1-7

REFERENCE MATERIAL Acts 22.1-21; 26.1-32

ACTS 9 But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: 4 and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he *said*, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: 6 but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. 11 And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; 12 and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight.

17 And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. 18 And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. SAUL THE PERSECUTOR, verses 1, 2. In contrast with Philip's zeal in furthering the increase of believers, Luke now records Saul's zeal in hindering it, and begins his sentence therefore with a *But*. By means of a vivid metaphor, Luke shows us how Saul's presence brought terror to the hearts of the disciples whom he hunted: "But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest." The metaphor is based on the fact that a person under stress of a great excitement breathes rapidly, pants, in his effort to give expression to his thoughts. From the high priest Saul asked and readily obtained letters to the synagogues in Damascus (the followers of Christ had not yet withdrawn from the Jewish synagogues). The number of Jews living in Damascus was large: in a tumult under Nero ten thousand were put to death. The letters Paul obtained permitted him to arrest believers, whether men or women, and bring them bound to Jerusalem. Paul doubtless intended to return to Jerusalem like a Roman conqueror with his captives. At Jerusalem the captives would have been brought before the Sanhedrin for trial. "In the pride of his Pharisee's heart, he strikes out the idea to reverse the maxim of the Crucified Leader of the hated sect, and go into all the world and suppress the gospel in every creature" (Henry Drummond).

"I verily thought," says Paul in Acts 26, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Paul meant well, but he was sadly mistaken. An automobile will go with equal speed in either direction according as the wheel is turned, and alas for its occupants and for by-standers if it is turned in the wrong direction at a critical moment! We may think our words or actions are right, and yet they may be far wrong, and may result in untold harm to others.

The objects of Paul's hatred are called "those of the Way," for they were known not only for their belief in Jesus as the Christ but also for the manner of their daily living, all things being held in common. It is interesting to recall that the original meaning of our word *heresy* was *choice,* and that it stood for an acceptance of a particular tenet of faith or of particular modes of life.

II. THE PERSECUTOR ARRESTED IN HIS COURSE, verses 3-9. Suddenly as he approached Damascus he who was bent on arresting believers was himself arrested by the One in whom they believed. He saw a bright light and heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" In a flash Paul knew that he had been fighting against God. Falling to the earth, he tremblingly asked, "Who art

thou, Lord?" The answer came, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." In persecuting the followers of Jesus he had been persecuting Jesus himself: Mt. 25-40.

Paul did not know his Lord then, he did not fully know him till long afterward. Are there those whom you can influence who ask, "Who art thou, Lord"? Are they beset with doubts? Are they uncertain about the Christian faith? They are nearer the kingdom than the indifferent ones who never ask such a question. You may not be able to clear up all their doubts, but if you can get them to obey the vision as far as it has come to them, to start with what they do believe about God and Christ and live up to that knowledge and belief, to follow every call that leads to higher things, then you may rest assured that fuller light will come to them.

(In the Authorized Version there is added here, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." The Revised Version omits this, because it is not found in the Greek manuscripts. A copyist is believed to have repeated it here in the Vulgate (whence it was translated in the Authorized Version) from Acts 22.10 and 26.14.)

"It is extremely unlikely that any form of argument would have convinced Paul; but there was that in him which made him sensitive to the vision and the words of the Damascus road. He was no skeptic. No man was ever more deeply penetrated with the sense of an invisible world. He was a believer in the supernatural, and a man with a poet's heart, whose senses were tuned to the rhythm of the infinite. A man of the world, bent on material gain, would have disputed the heavenliest vision, even though it had been unfolded by archangels and announced with all the trumpets of the sky. Paul did not dispute, evade, nor rationalize the vision" (Dr. W. J. Dawson).

"But rise," continued the voice, "and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." The men with Paul heard the voice, but beheld no one. In Acts 22.9 we read that "they heard not the voice"; the explanation is that they heard a sound, but did not hear the words which Saul heard. Saul was blind when he arose, and like a little child was led by the hand into Damascus, where he remained three days without sight and without food. What a contrast between Saul setting out for Damascus and Saul entering the city!

"Paul was on his way thither when the miracle arrested him, going to seize the disciples of Jesus wherever he could find them. And now God says: 'Still go into the city where you meant to go. Your route shall not be altered. Your new life must walk over the same road where the old life was walking.' A new spirit always seems to demand new circumstances. But we come to see that only by long, slow changes and in most general ways do circumstances adapt themselves to spirit; and we learn to understand that spirit must triumph over circumstances, not by casting them away and making new ones, but by overpowering them as they are, and making them serve greater ends" (Phillips Brooks).

Never afterwards was Paul himself in doubt as to the reality of Christ's appearing to him. He tells us in First Corinthians (9.1) that in the light he saw Jesus himself, in his risen, glorified body. To him the Risen Christ came, he believed, as he came to the eleven apostles during the Forty Days after the resurrection—this was the ground on which he claimed equal authority with the other apostles: 1 Cor. 15.8; 2 Cor. 11.5; Gal. 2.8; Acts 22.21. What sort of vision was it? "The answer to the question will vary according to a man's conception of the universe. The question has no existence for faith. Faith knows that what happened, happened in any case because God chose to work it thus—whether Paul really beheld Jesus in the light, or whether it was merely a visionary sight."

"The appeal of conscience is not less the voice of God than the expostulation at the gates of Damascus" (Dr. W. L. Watkinson).

II. THE HUMAN HELPER, verses 10-16. Saul was taken to the house of Judas, an influential man in the Jewish community at Damascus, who lived on its principal street, the one called "Straight." "Saul had been convicted of sin, but he had not yet found peace. He had lost his old life, but had not yet found the new one. He had been stunned, but he is not yet free!" (Dr. J. H. Jowett). Some warm-hearted and brave believer must be found who could go to him, sympathize with him, and lead him into the fellowship of The Way. Such a man was Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well reported by all the Jews that dwelt at Damascus (Acts 22.12).

Here is another illustration of the invariable work of the Holy Spirit: he

PAUL'S ESCAPE FROM DAMASCUS

From a Painting by Earnest Prater

will arrest and convict, but he sends Ananias to complete the work" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

In a vision Ananias was given the seemingly dangerous commission to seek out Saul and lay his hands upon him that he might receive his sight. "For behold, he prayeth," was the astonishing information added. Saul, as a strict Pharisee, must have been in the habit of praying several times a day, but there was a difference now in his praying—he was calling on the name of Jesus, verse 14.

"One attaches different meanings to words at different times of life. You were once possessed of riches which you would now count poverty. Once you were proud of a house which now you ignore. So, whilst saying prayers, reciting prayerful terms, punctilious in ritual, exemplary in all the outward observance of his church, Paul had yet in a Christian sense never prayed. Prayer is a Christian acquisition" (Joseph Parker).

Ananias knew full well what had been Saul's purpose in coming to Damascus, he must have known that he himself was one whom Saul had intended to arrest. Naturally he hesitated to carry out such a commission. But when told that Saul had been chosen to witness for Jesus before Gentiles and kings and the Children of Israel, Ananias courageously undertook his mission.

IV. SIGHT RESTORED, verses 17, 18. Entering the house of Judas, Ananias laid his hands upon the blinded man and addressed him as "Brother Saul." How astounded must have been this arch-persecutor of believers to hear these brotherly words! Here was a new way of life, and here were new friendships awaiting him.

Saul and Ananias were brothers in Christ. Every Christian church should be a brotherhood. All its members should be on an equal footing, however varied their mental gifts and large or meager their worldly possessions. All have a common chance to appreciate and hearten and help one another, a common opportunity for coöperation in service.

"Brother Saul," said Ananias, "the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Spirit." How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!

And straightway there fell from Saul's eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight. The Greek word here for *scales* is a technical medical term and is one of the many proofs that Acts was written by Luke the physician. Paul arose and was baptized, and he took food and was strengthened. Then Ananias told him what he was destined to do—nothing less than open the door of faith to the Gentiles!

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What is the first mention of Paul in The Acts? In what words did Stephen express his vision of the Lord? In what words did Christ express the thought that deeds done unto others were done unto him? How was the Ethiopian treasurer converted?

Paul on the Way to Damascus. You remember that after the death of Stephen a great persecution arose against the Church in Jerusalem, and all save the apostles were scattered abroad throughout Judea and Samaria, and that Saul, who consented to the death of Stephen, laid waste the Church, entering into every house, and dragging forth men and women committed them to prison.

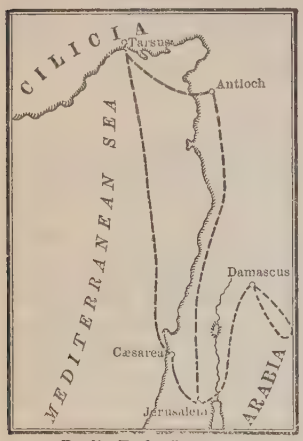
Paul aimed at nothing less than the extirpation of the sect of "The Way." Many had fled from Jerusalem to Damascus, and thither Paul hastened armed with letters from the high priest which would permit him to bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Probably he took the quickest and most frequented route, which ran directly north to Shechem, and then inclining to the east led around the southern end of the Sea of Galilee and on to Damascus. The distance is one hundred and thirty miles "as the crowd flies," a journey then of six to eight days.

Damascus, then and now the chief city of Syria, claims to be the oldest "living city" in the world. Josephus declares that it was founded by Uz, the grandson of Shem. We first hear of it in Abraham's time. It is watered by rivers famous in Scripture, the Barada (Abana) and Awaj (Pharpar), which Naaman thought better than all the waters of Israel. These rivers have made a rich plain in the midst of the surrounding deserts celebrated for its gardens and orchards and fountains. The natives today call Damascus the "Silver Spoon," because of its shape and appearance in the midst of luxurious vegetation.

"Straight Street" runs east and west through the entire city. In Paul's day it was a hundred feet wide and was divided by high Corinthian colonnades into three avenues, the central one for foot passengers, the others for chariots and horses. It is still the most important thoroughfare of the city, but it makes several turns and is in part roofed over with glass and lined with shops, seemingly an endless arcade.

Tradition long located the scene of Paul's conversion six miles southwest of the city, but now a site more convenient for visitors is shown not far from a house on the city wall credited with being the one from which Paul escaped in a basket (next lesson). Over the gateway of a house within the walls there is the inscription, "San Ananiæ Domus," House of Saint Ananias, and within its courtyard a subterranean grotto, used by the Franciscans as a chapel, has pictures representing Paul's vision and baptism.



Paul's Early Journeys

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The direct appeal should be used sparingly in class. Unless used sparingly the maximum of its effectiveness will be lost. This is because that which is often heard at length stirs less than that which comes with freshness and novelty; it must ever be kept in mind that the unusual arrests the attention and stirs the mind more than the usual.

The indirect appeal can be used constantly. The presentation of truth which in its own nature appeals; the citing of motives which are of a nature to command consideration; the recital of incidents which are suggestive of duty and privilege; the recounting of holy decisions by other souls—all these will do work for Christ even when no direct appeal is made.

He who bears a message to a human soul must watch as those who give account. He can learn by his own observation as he talks privately with those whom he would win. He can learn by studying the methods of others as revealed in the first, third and fourth chapters of John's Gospel, and in many other Scriptures. Andrew, Jesus and Philip used but few words in summoning to discipleship respectively Peter, Philip and Nathanael. Jesus, by flank attack, captured the soul of the Samaritan woman.

A boy of fourteen was told by his teacher that she prayed for him every night. She said no more. She did not alienate him nor rouse antagonism or opposition by putting on an air of pious concern. She said simply, "I pray for you every night," and God used that simple, kindly word to send him to daily Bible reading and prayer, and ultimately to conversion and the Christian ministry.—Condensed from an article in The Sunday-School Worker, by Dr. O. C. S. Wallace.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
A STUDY OF CONVERSION

Beginning the Lesson. The conversion of Saul was startlingly sudden. So sudden was it that it was almost impossible for those of The Way in Damascus to be convinced that it had actually taken place. But was it as sudden as it looked to them? A noted British preacher (Dr. J. D. Jones) calls the vision on the way to Damascus the explosion that laid Saul's Pharisaism in ruins; "but who can read the seventh chapter of Romans," he questions, "with its story of spiritual conflict, with its record of Saul's discovery of the inability of the law to bring him the righteousness he craved, without seeing that God had for years been 'laying the train'—preparing Saul for the mighty change?"

Subconsciously, we may feel sure, although his conscious mind realized it not, Saul had been troubled since that day when he took an inactive part in the slaying of Stephen, and had seen the calm, triumphant, gleaming face of the dying man who had borne such convincing testimony to his Lord. "If Stephen had not prayed, Paul would never have preached," said Augustine. Saul was ready for the vision. See the Second Topic.

Paul's Conversion Readjusted his Life Values. In a sermon delivered three

years ago Dr. J. H. Jowett enumerated the things Paul had gloried in before his conversion. There had been the pride of race: he was "of the stock of Israel," and he gloried in it. There had been the pride of lineage: "a Hebrew of the Hebrews"—a pride that is creative of caste and clans, and Paul had it. There had been religious pride: "as touching the law a Pharisee"—he was proud of his religious aloofness. There had been the pride of fanatical intolerance: "as touching zeal, persecuting the Church"—and he was proud of being miserably narrow and of thinking everybody else in the world wrong; proud of intolerance; proud that he was so zealous that his fidelity expressed itself in cruelty. And there had been pride of moral achievement: "as touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."

On the way to Damascus a new pride was born. Dr. Jowett tells us how it happened. First of all, Christ Jesus gave him an entirely new conception of God. Hitherto he had seen God only through the law. Now he saw him embodied in truth and grace. He had seen God on a throne high and lifted up; now he saw him on a cross dying for the sins of the world. He saw him in a human face, a face radiant with the glory of the resurrection. With all his prides and glories on him Paul came into the presence of that Savior and in the supreme glory of the Son of God all those minor glories melted away.

The most wonderful effect upon Paul was this: his new pride made him very humble. And the sentence in which the humility was most firmly expressed is this, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

The Conversion of an Unreligious Man. A young English physician, utterly unspiritual, happens into an auditorium in which an American evangelist is conducting a service. Nothing the evangelist says, nothing the great choir sings, impresses him, but the manner in which the evangelist conducts the service, prompt, businesslike, shrewd and sane, leads him to review the mental process by which he has hitherto evaded the religious appeal. The young man had not been irreligious, but unreligious. He goes away from this service to assume henceforth a new attitude, not alone toward religion, but toward the world at large. The center of life has shifted. Presently we find him a volunteer surgeon on a hospital ship among the neglected fishermen of the North Sea, and a little later, apostle, messenger, and "angel" to the Labrador coast.—Charles Carroll Albertson, in The Distinctive Ideas of Jesus.

A Christian Youth Trying to "Get Religion." In one of the most helpful books published in recent years, What and Where Is God, there is a chapter in which the author, Richard La Rue Swain, strikingly recounts his efforts to become converted after the manner expected thirty years ago in a small, untutored community.

As a child, he says, religion was as real to him as his parents, or the atmosphere he breathed, or the food he ate. He had always been a Christian, but the conviction grew upon him that he must get "old people's religion," or be lost. The crisis came at the age of fifteen when a revival was being held at the school house. Quickly within himself he made the momentous decision, and surrendered himself unconditionally to the will of God. Peace failed to come, because he believed that he must experience the miracle of regeneration at the "mourner's bench."

So he went forward, although the knowledge that he was observed by mocking eyes hurt like the thongs of a whip on a bare back. He tried to feel sorry for his sins; and not succeeding in that, tried to feel sorry because he was not sorry.

"Those kneeling with me," he writes, "asked whether I believed in God. No one could have believed more fully than I did. Then they asked if I believed that he sent his Son into the world to save sinners. This I believed without question. Did I believe that he came to save me, and that he wanted to save me now? This, too, I believed. 'Do you feel that he saves you now?' I did not know. 'Well,' they said, 'you will know when he saves you—so you must make no mistake there.' While I believed everything, yet I did not experience the miracle. As they pleaded, first with God to save me, and then with me to surrender all to God and believe, I became utterly bewildered and hardened. There seemed to be no reality in anything.

"The next night I repeated the experience with like sad consequences. I felt a great depression of spirits without further results. The next day I was still greatly depressed, but made up my mind that I would get religion or break a blood vessel in the attempt—and I nearly broke the blood vessel. As I continued to pray without ceasing, there came to me a little suggestion of gladness which caused me to exclaim, 'Oh, I believe I am getting religion!' Though the burden seemed to be lifting, yet it was some minutes before another feeling of gladness came.

"After supper I started for the school house across the dark fields. During that

journey of over a mile, the psychic lights came on making all things beautiful. At the same time I was made impressively glad. The great change appeared to be in the universe rather than in myself. I laughed and cried for joy.

"After the sermon the minister came to me to inquire my condition. When with great joy I told him that I was converted, I was asked to relate my experience. This unexpected request shattered my beautiful world as completely as a hammer stroke would have shattered a piece of crystal. Such a stage fright seized me that I could neither move nor speak before they were compelled to go on with the service. This embarrassing experience sent me from the highest state of bliss to the deepest state of gloom. Though fully expecting to be happy again after joining the church, yet my misery only increased.

"*This was inevitable.* I had identified religion with an *abnormal psychic state.* And such a state would not return without another terrific effort. Since I had always been a Christian, it was not conversion that I needed, but *a deeper commitment of myself to the will and work of God.* And as I have already explained, this I had done before 'trying to get religion.' The moral will is the spiritual spine. If it stands erect in its duties toward God and men, the whole spiritual life will come into normal feeling and action. My unconditional submission to the will of God was normal, beautiful, and necessary. But the experience which came two days later should be characterized as a super-normal, psychic state, self-induced; while the psychic state lasted my true religious feelings coöperated vigorously; but when it subsided, as it was bound to do, my true religious emotions likewise disappeared. For years, all references to spirituality were understood by me to mean an exciting, nervous thrill; such a thrill as I had once felt."

The Conversion of a Wicked Man. John Masefield's widely read poem: "The Everlasting Mercy," is a poet's study in the fact of conversion. He presents the problem to us in the history of Saul Kane, a village wastrel, a drunkard, poacher, prize-fighter, and libertine. An eminent psychologist has divided souls into two classes, "the souls that are tough, and the souls that are tender." All students of life would place Saul Kane among the tough souls and give him a distinguished place in that category. What can be done with such a man? Is there any remedy which civilization possesses for such a social malady? The answer of Masefield is, that there is power in the grace of God to change that life in a moment of wonder. The faith which the poet expresses must be the unquestioned faith of the Church of Christ. There is no hopeless or irrecoverable human life, desperate though its condition may appear. The deepest, truest thing about the worst man is that he has been made in the image of God, and that, though it may be scarred and defaced, the Divine impression can never be destroyed. In his lowest degradation he is different from the brute to whose level he seems to descend. His life there is an unnatural life. The conversion of such a man is actually a return to himself.

The conversion of Saul Kane began when he was in the ring, about to commence a prize-fight with a fellow poacher, surrounded by:

"The five and forty human faces
Inflamed by drink and going to races."

From the outset he has had a feeling of remorse, but he puts the thought away. After the fight he and his associates resort to the village inn, where the night is spent in bestial drinking and revelry. And there, while his companions lie about him in drunken stupor, we have the first indication that the mind of Saul Kane is being moved upon by the Divine Soul-winner,

"I opened window wide and leaned
Out of that pigsty of the fiend,
And felt a cool wind go like grace
About the sleeping market-place.
The clock struck three, and sweetly, slowly,
The bells chimed Holy, Holy, Holy;
And in a second's pause there fell
The cold note of the chapel bell.
And then a cock flew, flapping wings,
And summat made me think of things."

It was all a mad, disgusting game in which he was inextricably mixed up, but there is no hope of change or escape now:

"For parson chaps are mad supposin'
A chap can change the road he's chosen,"

and at that hopelessness the devil's voice came counselling suicide. In the recoil from the man he has been, Saul Kane acts like one beside himself, rushing out into the dark. He raves aloud of hell and destruction, and turns the quiet English country town into a pandemonium.

It was a word spoken by a woman, in the public house where Saul Kane was drinking that night, which the Holy Spirit used to lead this man to affirm, "Jesus is Lord."

"Miss Bowne, the Friend, went round at ten
To all the pubs in all the place,
To bring the drunkard's souls to grace."

To Saul Kane she spoke:

"Saul Kane," she said, "when next you drink
Do me the gentleness to think
That every drop of drink accursed
Makes Christ within you die of thirst,
That every dirty word you say
Is one more flint upon his way,
Another thorn about his head,
Another mock by where he tread,
Another nail, another cross,
All that you are is that Christ's loss."

There and then Christ entered to give this man a new birth. We look at the tap-room of a public house, and we see Saul Kane confronted by "The Friend," and we ask "How can these things be?" But there is a wind blowing; a wind entering the heart emptied now of pride and self-sufficiency; a wind rushing in to fill the vacant place; the searching, cleansing, healing breath of God. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit."—Condensed from Spiritual Voices in Modern Literature, by Trevor H. Davies.

The Conversion of a Good Man. There are thousands who do not see exactly what conversion could do to them. And their great difficulty in changing their life has just been this: "What, after all, should we really have to change? Our lives at present can scarcely be distinguished from the real Christians around us. Had we been irreligious, or profane, or undutiful, or immoral, conversion might do something for us; but we belong to the class who feel how well we have been brought up, how much our interests are gathered round religion, and, generally, how circumspect and proper our entire outward life has been. We do not really see, indeed, what change conversion could make."

Let those who really do not know very well what religion could do for them take a little quiet thought like Paul. Let them look once more, not at the circumference, but at the center of their life. Let them ask one question about it: *"Is it Christ?"* There is no middle way in religion—*self* or *Christ*. The quality of the selfishness—intellectual, literary, artistic—the fact that our self's center may be of a superior order of self, does nothing to destroy this grave distinction. It is between *all* self and Christ. This question of centers is the vital question. "To me to live is"—what? "To me to live is myself!" Suppose that it is so. What kind of end to a life is this? How much nobler a center our life is worthy of—our one life—which is to live for evermore; which is to live with a great center or a mean one—meanly or greatly for evermore! Think of living with oneself for ever and for ever!

We have all in some way made the discovery of Christ—we know more about Christ than Paul did when he became a Christian. When he made him the center of his life, he knew less of him perhaps than most of us. Our preparation, as far as knowledge of the new center goes, is complete. The change, as far as that is concerned, might happen *now*.

The question comes to be then, finally, simply a question of transfer. To me to live is myself, or to me to live is Christ. To live for Christ is not simply the sublime doctrine which it includes of *Christ our life*. It is not so much Christ our life, but rather *our life for Christ*.

Shall it be, then, our life for Christ? "To me to live is Christ." Contrast it with all the other objects of life; take all the centers out of all the great lives, and compare them one by one. Can you match the life-creed of Paul—"to me to live is Christ"?

We have all in some sense, indeed, already made the discovery of Christ. We may be as near it now as Paul was when he left Jerusalem. There was no notice given

that he was to change masters. The new Master simply crossed his path one day, and the great change was come. How often has he crossed our path?—Condensed from The Ideal Life, by Henry Drummond.

For Discussion. 1. Consider the men whom Christ has mastered; and then consider a second thing: Why has he not mastered you?—Wendell Phillips.

2. What is conversion? How do adult conversions differ and why? How does a child's conversion differ from an adult's? Should the Church-school observe special decision days?

3. The work which Ananiases can do in the churches today.

4. Preachers alone cannot win everyone to Christ: they need the help of personal workers.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did Paul go to Arabia? 2. What qualities had Saul the persecutor which were invaluable in Paul the missionary? 3. Contrast Paul's experiences at Damascus with his expectations as he journeyed thither. 4. Contrast Paul's reception by the Christians at Jerusalem with their attitude at his departure.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
HOW SAUL WAS CONVERTED

Beginning the Lesson. Thorwaldsen, the great sculptor, was born in Denmark but received his art education in Rome. When he was asked when his birthday was, he replied: "I don't know; I came for the first time to Rome on March eighth, 1797." And Paul, who was also called Saul, might have answered the same question thus: "I was born in Tarsus, and am a citizen of no mean city, but I first came to know the Lord Jesus Christ on my way to Damascus three years after his death."

In the East "St. Stephen's Day" is the day of his martyrdom, but "St. Paul's Day" is the day of his conversion, the day on which his true life began. On St. Paul's Day the Christians of Damascus walk in a procession to the traditional spot where Paul had his vision of the Lord, and read the narrative in The Acts which we study today.

Paul's Preparedness for the Vision on the Damascus Road. In one of the chapters of "The Ideal Life," Henry Drummond uses his imagination in a way that easily carries his reader's conviction with him, as he ponders the manner in which Saul may have been prepared for the startling vision that so suddenly wrought his conversion.

He imagines that it had been a long time since Paul had had a chance to think, but now the time for reflection had come. And he was too great a man to think well of his life when he did think. As he lay down at night in the quiet wilderness his thoughts must often have turned on the true quality of the life to which he was sacrificing his talents and his youth. He felt that his life was miserably small. He had really nothing to show for his life. "After all," perhaps he cried, "to me to live is Saul, to me to live is Saul." His conversion was then begun. There was no retreat for a man like him.

His first achievement was only to discover himself. His second was to discover some one better than himself. He wanted a new center to his life—where was he to find it? His way led through the Holy Land. Perhaps kind words spoken by Christ were repeated to him by the peasants and to him the tender deeds which Christ wrought were recounted. Perhaps in passing through Samaria, he met a woman at a well who told a strange tale for the thousandth time, of a weary Man who had sat there and said he was the Christ. Galilee and Capernaum and the lake shore were full of memories of the one true life. And no doubt the Spirit's silent working had been telling on his mind during all those quiet days, leading up his thoughts to the revelation that was to come; when he deliberately removed the old center from his life, and put a new one in its place. Instead of "to me to live is Paul," it became, "to me to live is Christ."

General Feng's Conversion. In the year 1900 a fanatical organization in China known as the Boxers was breathing out threatening and slaughter against the Christians. Among the American missionaries who met martyrdom was Mary Morrill. She was beheaded, and a young Chinese cadet by the name of Feng was a witness. He heard her plead for the lives of the missionaries and of the Chinese Christians. "I have saved your people," she told the infuriated mob, "I have saved them when they came to me sick. Can you not spare our lives?" And then she begged that they would slay her but spare the rest.

Her sacrificial love and her fortitude when led off to her execution, made a deep impression upon young Feng.

"Why did she do it? Why did she do it?" he kept asking everyone he could in regard to her heroic death.

"He could find no satisfactory answer during the years that followed until he himself was converted to Christianity and came to know that same power of the love of Christ which enabled the missionary to freely and gladly offer up her life," wrote a Chinese correspondent of a British paper. "Thus the life of that young girl apparently wasted and cut off cruelly, will go on through the influence of this great Chinese leader into all the years to come."

The young man is now General Feng, and is known everywhere as "the Christian General." Over five thousand of his own army have been led to Christ, for he is "the most mightily used Christian in China."

Last week we heard how the Ethiopian treasurer was converted. How did he meet and answer the question, "Who art thou, Lord?" How did he confess that he believed him to be the Christ, the Son of God? How did he afterwards prove the reality of his conversion, as tradition tells us?

What a contrast there is between the conversion of that Ethiopian and the conversion of Paul! Paul's conviction that Jesus was an impostor was suddenly changed to a conviction that he is the Messiah; his hatred of Jesus was instantly changed into love for him; his desire to persecute believers turned in a flash into a desire to become himself a follower of the Christ. His whole course was arrested and revolutionized in a moment.

"Some people are converted like the flashing of a meteor; with others it is like the rising of the morning sun, and you cannot tell the minute it was light," said a great revivalist, Dwight L. Moody. There are some who have had an overwhelming sense of their sin and a sudden definite assurance of their forgiveness; there are others who have been led to God by a gradual appreciation of his goodness and cannot tell when first they knew and served him.

Is it necessary for children who have been reared in Christian homes to be converted? Must not every one be converted in order to enter the Kingdom of God? But what does conversion mean for such a child? "It means the conscious, deliberate acceptance for himself of that mode of life to which he has been reared. When his attitude toward Christ is no longer mere custom or habit into which he has been led by those who love him, but his own glad, voluntary choice as well, then that new attitude constitutes his conversion. It is the conscious turning of the soul toward the love and the service of God."

All Do Not Have Paul's Experience. Men read the life of Saul on the road to Damascus, and expect some mysterious light to shine on their pathway. Many wait for some similar experience in their own career.

Among the mountains of the Adirondacks there is a beautiful lake called Placid, and on one side of the lake there is a high precipice with springs in the crevasses, and with mud all over the ledges. Last summer a little child, disobeying its parents, climbed up the side of the rocks, slipped over a boulder, fell upon a ledge covered with slime and spring water, and was carried to the hotel having suffered grievous injury. For days and weeks the child rehearsed the story of its fall, and its marvelous deliverance therefrom. But there was another little companion that kept within the appointed limits. Now, what if this second child, having listened to the deliverance that came to his companion, had longed for a similar marvelous experience, and often commented upon the fact that he had never been delivered from the peril of a heavy fall on the rocks, and that, since he had never fallen in the mire and had his garments washed, he very much doubted whether he had any right to be happy, or indeed whether or not he was alive and at Lake Placid at all?—Dr. N. D. Hillis.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. The number of ways to God is the number of the souls of men.—Harold Begbie.

The appeal of conscience is not less the voice of God than the expostulation at the gates of Damascus.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the meaning of "made havoc of them that called on his name"? 2. What does "assayed" mean? 3. Why was the suspicious attitude toward Saul of the believers at Jerusalem excusable? 4. How did Paul show great courage? 5. Why did Paul go to Tarsus?

LESSON VIII—MAY 24

SAUL BEGINS HIS GREAT CAREER

GOLDEN TEXT: I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 1 Corinthians 2.2

LESSON Acts 9.20-31 DEVOTIONAL READING Joshua 1.1-9

ACTS 9.20 And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God. 21 And all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havoc of them that called on this name? and he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests. 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ.

23 And when many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel together to kill him: 24 but their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates also day and night that they might kill him: 25 but his disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.

26 And when he was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. 28 And he was with them going in and going out at Jerusalem, 29 preaching boldly in the name of the Lord: and he spake and disputed against the Grecian Jews; but they were seeking to kill him. 30 And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

31 So the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. PAUL PROCLAIMS CHRIST AT DAMASCUS, verses 20-22. Upon his return from Arabia (see The Historical Background), Paul joined the circle of disciples at Damascus and proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God. His bold preaching greatly amazed the Jewish authorities, who knew what his course had been at Jerusalem and what his purpose had been in coming to Damascus. But Paul's power as a preacher for Christ increased, and he confounded the Jews, proving that this is the Christ. "The somewhat unusual Greek word for *proving* means literally *putting together,* and so is used for the putting together of arguments."

II. PAUL'S ESCAPE FROM HIS ENEMIES AT DAMASCUS, verses 23-25. The defeated Jews plotted to kill Paul, and this became known to him. Learning that the Jews were keeping watch day and night at the city gates to prevent Paul from leaving the city alive, the Christian disciples lowered him in a basket over the city wall, letting the basket down from the window of a house built either against the wall or top of the wall. In somewhat similar fashion the spies escaped from Jericho, Joshua 2.15.

III. PAUL'S RECEPTION AT JERUSALEM, verses 26-28. Paul went back to Jerusalem and attempted to join the Christian community, but he did not meet a cordial reception. The disciples were afraid of him; they did not think it possible that he could be sincere. Naturally they could not forget his former association with their enemies, the Jewish authorities, and his fierce persecution of Christians, and probably they thought his calling himself a believer was but a trick, and once the wolf had them in his power he would throw off his sheep's clothing.

It is not easy to live down one's past.

Barnabas came to the rescue and set the fears of the disciples at rest. He took Paul by the hand, formally presented him to the apostles, and vouched for the truth of his report of his vision and his work at Damascus. The disciples then admitted Paul to their fellowship, and he was with them daily as one of them.

"It does not require any great exercise of the imagination to realize that the primitive Church by its suspiciousness and by its coldness ran a great risk that day of losing Paul. In these days of ours, coldness and aloofness have chilled the ardor of many a young disciple. There are people outside the church altogether just because they have not been kindly received by the people inside the church" (Dr. J. D. Jones).

Tradition says that Paul and Barnabas had been pupils together in the school of Gamaliel. Dr. J. D. Jones recalls the fact that Cyprus, the early home of Barnabas, was only a few hours' sail from Cilicia and Tarsus, Paul's early home, and thinks it

quite within the probabilities that Barnabas was sent to Tarsus, the nearest and one of the most famous university towns, to finish his education, and there a friendship had sprung up between the two young men which had been temporarily broken off when Barnabas became a believer and Paul a persecutor.

The name Barnabas means, "Son of Consolation": he was in truth a man of utmost kindliness by nature. As we follow the history of The Acts we shall see that Barnabas devoted his life to those in trouble. It is a noble ministry for any one. "The way in which Barnabas strengthened Paul is the kind of strengthening which thousands of converts need in our own day, especially those who are leaving behind them the record of glaring and notorious lives. They need the friendship of men who shield them from suspicion, and who by their confidence nourish their frailty into hopeful strength" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

At Jerusalem, as at Damascus, Paul preached boldly. "For one solemn moment on the way to Damascus the wide creation contains only two—a soul to be saved, and a Savior. But what follows? The man returns a debtor. When he begins to pay it, the debt grows larger; every instalment increases the total sum. He may be content to pay what he owes to Damascus, but he will remember tomorrow that he owes more to Jerusalem. The demand of Macedonia will be followed by the distraint of Rome. And the more he feels the debt grow, the more his heart rejoices, the more his courage responds.

"So it stands out in the life of the great apostle, but so, too, does it reappear in every true Christian experience. No man can return from Calvary out of debt. The remission includes the commission. Francis of Assisi saw the Crucified, and at the same time heard the weary call of many lands. William Carey saw him—and India; Morrison saw him—and China; Livingston saw him—and Africa. It is the debtors of Calvary that must become the world's redeemers" (British Weekly).

IV. PAUL'S ESCAPE FROM HIS ENEMIES IN JERUSALEM, verses 29-30. After only two weeks in the city (Gal. 1.18) Paul found that the Jews were determined to kill him. "A thoroughly candid and genuine man never can understand an insincere and hypocritical one, and Paul had believed that if he were to go to Jerusalem and speak as a Pharisee to the Pharisees, and open to them the Old Testament, and tell them what he had discovered of the Kingdom of God, they would be as glad to accept the glad tidings as he was. He argued this matter, he tells us (Acts 22.17-21), with the Lord. He said to him, 'Why, I persecuted the Christians; I am a Pharisee; they will understand me; let me begin my work at Jerusalem.'

"And the Lord answered him by letting him try the experiment—a way the Lord has of answering us, when we want to have our own way instead of doing his" (Dr. Lyman Abbott).

"It was not surprising that the Jews conspired to make away with him. He had abjured all that was most precious both to his fellow-students and to his teacher Gamaliel. What seemed to them a stumbling-block had become a corner-stone of his religious life, and on it he was to build a structure of thought whose stability neither he nor those who went about to make away with him could foresee."

Paul was obliged to flee. His new-found brothers sent him to the seaport of Cæsarea, and thence to Tarsus.

"In the district of Cilicia he remained, probably in some modest missionary service, for the astonishing period of ten or more years; being, as he says, 'quite unknown' to the Christian churches of Judæa; they merely heard that 'our former persecutor is now preaching the faith he once harried,' Gal. 1, 20-23. It was a period of self-subordination and discipline such as few converts have ever been called on to endure, and it was not until the end of these fourteen years of obscurity, and when he was not less than forty years of age, that this distrusted convert asserted his right to undertake important service" (Dr. F. G. Peabody).

Paul was content to submit to long years of self-discipline and self-preparation; he was in middle life before he engaged in the great missionary work which The Acts records. There are lessons here for modern Christians which Professor P. A. Hayes points out: "If Paul could take three years to get his theology formulated, any young man can afford to take an equal time to attain a like result. If Paul could work for ten years in obscurity, surely

any young man can be content to labor for the same length of time before he is called into any prominent field" (P. A. Hayes).

V. PEACE AND PROSPERITY IN THE CHURCH, verse 31. Throughout all Judea, Samaria and Galilee, the Church for a time had peace and was enabled to grow in grace and in the fear of the Lord and in numbers also.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In what frame of mind did Paul set out for Damascus? What did he intend to do? What qualities did he show that were admirable although he was on the wrong course? How was he turned about? What have we heard before this about Barnabas?

Paul in Arabia. Luke says nothing about Paul's stay in Arabia, but Paul writes in his Epistle to the Galatians: "When it was the good pleasure of God to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia, and again I returned unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem."

Like Jesus at the beginning of his public ministry, Paul before entering upon his work went into the wilderness to fight his inner battles and think his problems through. "The streams that turn the machinery of the world rise in solitary places," as Dr. John R. Mott is fond of saying.

Some scholars suppose that by Arabia is meant Mt. Sinai, but had Paul gone no farther than into the desert region near Damascus he might still have said that he went to Arabia.

Cæsarea was the seaport for Jerusalem. Tarsus, on the coast of Cilicia, a province of Asia Minor, was the birthplace of Paul.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Winning a boy to Christ is one step; teaching him to do similar work with and for another boy is the next step. Many a boy has given himself to Christ only to find that his new-found joy is not supposed to be communicable by him to other boys of his own age, judging as he will by the lack of emphasis laid upon what he is expected to do in that direction.

Certain facts as to boy nature are guide posts to the right way of reaching a boy with the evangelistic idea. It may be assumed that the boy is always glad to let other boys know, individually, when he gets a present of a new knife. If he owns a first-class football outfit he does not hide it from view, but he is likely to wear it in season and out of season. Whatever material possession he acquires is rarely withheld from his playmates. Experience with boys in the things of the spirit confirms the conviction that a boy is generally willing and sometimes eager to tell other boys, individually, of what Christ means to him.

The spirit of indifference is rarely found in boy life. Enthusiasm is rather the rule. He will not think of so many false reasons why it is hard to speak to others personally about Christ as a grown man will. If Christ is real to him, he can make him real to another boy, and he makes little fuss about it.—Philip E. Howard.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
COURAGE IN WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with The Historical Background and The Text Explained.

I am Determined not to Know Anything among You, Save Jesus Christ. From the time of his conversion forward Paul was a changed man. He sank to the earth bewildered and stunned. He came to himself, groping like a blind man; and for some three years he dwelt apart, pondering on the vision, and seeking to relate it to his thought and life. It had come to him like a bolt from the blue, a voice from the very presence of God. And the meaning of it, as he came in time clearly to see, was an unmistakable conviction that in this Jesus whom he was persecuting, whom he hated with a bitter hate, there was the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

Now, Paul was a man who did not do things by halves, and when he discovered that he shaped his life accordingly. From that very moment he was Christ's man, he bore branded upon his body the marks of Christ Jesus. He was the bond-servant

of Christ; to him to live was Christ, and he was given up utterly and absolutely to this new Leader and Master of his soul.

It was then only a very little time since Jesus Christ had been upon the earth. Paul consorted with some of the men who had known him, he talked with them, and sat at their feet. He gathered from them his gospel, and came to understand from what they said something of the teaching and message of Jesus Christ. He was able to formulate in his own mind the kind of thing that the life of Jesus Christ meant for himself and for the world. He came forth from his days of retirement a man charged and possessed by Jesus Christ, and he went out into the world as the apostle of Christ, to preach his gospel to all men.—W. B. Selbie.

Elements in Paul's Character that were Valuable in his Witnessing for Christ. Paul was a man of immense conscience, immense pride, and immense combativeness. He was converted. His conscience did not diminish, his pride did not shrink, his combativeness did not flow out. All those great elements remained in him. Before he was converted, his conscience worked with malign feelings. Afterwards, his conscience worked with benevolent feelings. Before he was converted, his pride worked for selfishness. After he was converted, his pride worked for benevolence. Before he was converted, his combativeness worked for cruelty. After he was converted, it worked for zeal.—Henry Ward Beecher.

Paul's Courage in Witnessing for Christ. In one of his books Donald Hankey has a very arresting phrase. It is this: "True religion is betting one's life that there is a God." I want you to notice the nature of the bet. You don't bet your word that there is a God. You don't bet ten minutes nor a quarter of an hour that there is a God. You don't hazard threepence a week that there is a God. You bet your life on it. That is the stake. "True religion is betting one's life that there is a God."

I say that Donald Hankey's phrase is arresting, and very quickening, but there is not enough life and color in it for me. I wonder how the apostle Paul would recast and remint the phrase. Most assuredly he would so remold it as to make room for Christ. I wonder if this might be anything like the refashioning: "The true Christian religion is betting one's life that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the world, and hazarding everything for the honor of his friendship." Paul hazarded his life for the Lord Jesus Christ.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

What Steadied the Soldier. It was at a western camp. The captain of a certain detachment might be called the Beloved Captain. His slightest wish was a command to his men. One evening a private came to see him. His story has been heard before. At home it was his custom to kneel in prayer each night before retiring. The change of life to the barracks did not alter the custom. His act of kneeling was the signal for cat-calls and boots. But he kept up his custom despite them. He had come to the captain, however, to ask if he couldn't put a stop to the cat-calls and boots. There was some right way in which it could be done, the private thought.

The captain dismissed him and told him to return in an hour. When the private had gone, the captain prayed. He was ready when the private returned.

"You say your prayers tonight as usual, just after taps has blown," said the captain. "Everything will be all right."

The private saluted and was gone. When taps came he was doubtful, but resolved to abide by his captain's decision. He was ready to kneel for the evening prayer when the door of the barracks opened and the captain entered. Chatter ceased and some of the men came to attention. The captain walked over to the private's bunk. "Kneel," he said softly.

And as the private knelt the captain knelt beside him. There was a strange quiet in the barracks as these two offered up silent thanks to God.—St. Andrew's Cross.

Have You not a Word for Jesus?

"Have you not a word for Jesus? Will the world his praise proclaim?
Who shall speak if you are silent? you who know and love his name?
You, whom he hath called and chosen his own witnesses to be,
Will you tell your gracious Master, 'Lord, we cannot speak for thee'?
'Cannot!' though his grace abounding is your freely promised aid!
'Cannot!' though he stands beside you, though he says, 'Be not afraid!'"

What Do We Hazard for Christ? Our jealousy for orthodoxy is no proof at all of the value of our faith. What do we hazard for it? The measure of the

hazard reveals the vitality of our faith, and nothing else reveals it. It is not revealed by our controversial ardor. It is not revealed by our stern guardianship of orthodox spoils. It is not revealed by the scrupulous regularity of our attendance at church and worship. No, all these may mean nothing at all. What do we hazard for Christ? What have we staked on the venture? How much have we bet—that he is alive and King? Twopence a week, or our life? that is the test.

Now the New Testament teaches that the heart of faith is venture. If you will study the eleventh chapter of the letter to the Hebrews, that wonderful chapter where the heroes and heroines of faith are honored and commemorated as in the gathered memorials of some venerable cathedral—if you will study the shining legends of that chapter you will find that every instance reveals a vista of venture. Some man or woman is taking a hazard. "By faith, so and so—," and the sentence goes on to describe a splendid risk. Every emblazoned record preserves the renown of some man or woman who staked everything on the faithfulness of God. You pass from one to another, and they are all the stories of hazardous exploits. They are very dissimilar. In one instance a man is venturously putting himself at the head of a mass movement of his fellow countrymen, and he is leading them out of age-long bondage. In another instance a woman puts a bit of scarlet thread in a window, and risks her life in the venture. The roads are very different, but they are all alike in the display of a common venture.

And therefore do I say, on the authority of the Word of God, that there is no true faith without venture. Merely to hug a creed and take no risk, is no more faith than to hug a time-table is to take a journey.

How much shall we put into our religion? What shall be the hazard? How much money shall we put in? Shall it be less than we put on our backs, less than we put into the theaters? How much faculty shall we put into it? How much glory and strength? Shall we toy with it or shall we gamble our life in the business? What shall we put into it?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small,
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my life, my soul, my all.
—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in God—Our Contemporary.

For Discussion. 1. The difficulty of living down one's past.

2. Paul's singleness of purpose.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. In what sense is the word "saints" used in verse 32? 2. What similarities are there between Peter's healing of Æneas and Christ's healing of the palsied man? 3. What similarities are there between Peter's raising of Dorcas and Christ's raising of the daughter of Jairus? 4. What is a miracle? 5. Why does Luke chronicle the fact that Peter abode with a tanner?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
SAUL, A BOLD PREACHER

Beginning the Lesson. Next to Jesus Christ, Paul is the greatest personage of the New Testament. And the secret of his greatness is the fact that, as he tells us, he "was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision"—that vision which was our theme last week.

"Who art thou, Lord?" was Paul's first question when Christ revealed himself to him on the way to Damascus, and his second question was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" There was no half-heartedness in Paul; whatever he was he was with all his powers, and whatever he had to do he did with all his might. He was told that he was to be an apostle to the Gentiles. He spent the rest of his life in carrying out this commission.

What does "straightway" mean? What did Paul straightway do in Damascus? How did this affect his hearers? What did they say to one another in surprise? Why was Paul obliged to leave the city? How did he escape?

Paul and Peter Meet at Jerusalem. "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days," Paul records in his letter to the Galatians (1.18). What did they talk about in those two weeks? Each one told the other his experience with Christ, of that we may be sure. And probably Peter told his experience first, for Peter generally got ahead of the others.

A writer in The Christian gives their conversation very simply and in the way in which we can readily imagine they talked. Peter speaks:

"I shall never forget that day when we stood up around him; his face was so wistful that morning, yes, and so winsome. He began questioning us, and he said to us, 'Who do men say that I the Son of man am?' And we began to tell him that morning what the people were saying about him.

"Then he looked us right in the face, and we all felt that what had gone before was leading up to a personal probing; and he said, 'But who say ye that I am?' I do not know how it happened, but when I looked at him he was all glorious; it was the Mount of Transfiguration without the mountain. I saw it in a moment—the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and I said something that morning, Paul, it was larger and greater than I knew, so that it must have been true. I said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"

Wall of Damascus Traditional Site of Paul's Escape

Paul was very patient; and when Peter had finished his story he just put his hand on Peter's knee, and said:

"Now, Peter, I want to tell my story, and it is just as wonderful. You know one day I had an experience just as wonderful as yours; I think that is why we understand each other. We have been finding out each other in Jesus Christ. Jesus has done wonderful things for me since those days of rebellion and cruelty. You know I hated the Christians. I did not care who they were, or what they were; it was quite enough for me that they belonged to 'the Way.' Do you know, I set out to persecute the people of that 'Way'? I was on my way to Damascus. I had got all the letters I wanted, all signed—very influential names. I had the letters in my pocket to put me through.

"Well, I was on my way to Damascus. At twelve o'clock that day something happened that made the sunshine look dark, and I was blinded. Down I went, and I heard a voice speaking to me, saying, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' I felt a hand holding me up, and then it pushed me down, and kept me there; the hand laid hold of me, it was a tremendous power and a tremendous love. God had laid hold of me, and there was nothing else to do; I just looked up, and said, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'

"Life could never be the same after that. He blinded me, I was led. Think of it, I, who was intending to lead the Christians back to prison, I was led to Damascus, a prisoner of darkness! They led me up the stairs, and put me in the room, and I heard them shut the door and go out. There I was, and I put my hand into my wallet, and took out the parchments and the letters, and I crumpled them up in my hand, and said: 'God be merciful to me, a poor sinner.' I could not read the writing, but I knew what was there.

"God had put me into the room of silence, and into a three days' darkness to make me a child of the new Kingdom, to walk in the light as he is in the light. As I sat there trembling, I heard footsteps coming up the stairs, the door opened, and somebody came; I could not see him. Who could it be? He put his hand on my shouider, and then he said: '*Brother* Saul.' I did not know much about the real religion of that Way. After all I had done and all I had thought, it was a religion that could come and put its hand on my shoulder, and say: '*Brother* Saul, Jesus has something for you to do for him; and he wants you first.' You know, Peter, you saw a great deal that day, but you did not see more than I did when I was blind; I saw more than I ever saw in my life. I saw the love of God in the cross of Christ. I saw the hand of God stretched out toward me, and he called me

'Brother' when I was a rebel. He loved me, and I loved him because he loved me."

Paul was always a Hero. It was an act of supreme courage with which he began his Christian career. We read the account of his conversion and then the statement follows that straightway in the synagogues of Damascus he proclaimed that Jesus is the Son of God. All who heard him were amazed, for this was the man who had been aflame with zeal against the Christians, making havoc of all who called upon the name he now proclaimed as divine. Paul knew there would be multitudes everywhere who would say that he was a turncoat and a traitor, but he never hesitated on that account. With completeness of decision he espoused the new cause with all the fervor he had displayed in the old, and then without wavering he fought the good fight to the end. Henceforth his most bitter antagonists were his old friends. Naturally they hated him with a deadly hatred, and they did all they could to hinder his work and to rob him of the fruits of his labors, and they lay in wait for him to assassinate him. He was in peril from his own countrymen all the time.

Paul walked through the world with brow unabashed and with the firm step of a conqueror. He was God's nobleman, in the service of heaven. He stood before the crowned monarchs of earth as their teacher, accuser, superior; and they trembled before the power of his words. He met the philosophers in Athens with a higher truth than their philosophies had dreamed of; and some of them accepted and believed. He faced the mobs of Jerusalem, Ephesus and Philippi with fearless bravery; and they always felt that they had to do with a dauntlessly royal spirit when they tried to lay hands upon him. He was a hero everywhere. He had the absolute courage of his convictions.—Professor D. A. Hayes.

How We May Proclaim Jesus the Christ. Let us consider what it is that we desire to do. We may put it into a single sentence: We desire to bring our friend to the knowledge, and thus to the love of Jesus Christ, and so to allegiance to him. What will bring that about? Our own example will do a great deal. The fact that we are manifestly devoted to Jesus Christ, that we are not only regular in our attendance upon those services in which we are brought near to him, but are glad to go and honestly regret to stay away, that the will of Jesus Christ affects our will,—all this is of aggressive value. Though we do not say a word, it helps. Christianity on Sunday, with a lack of Christianity between Sundays, does not help. Devotion to the church, accompanied by selfishness at home, does not help. If we so live as to make it plain to those who know us that Jesus Christ is an ever-present strength and joy to us; if they see that he makes us considerate of others, cheerful under trials, patient in affliction, self-sacrificing, and having the spirit of service,—that helps immeasurably.

To bring our friend where he will hear about Jesus Christ is a way to effect our desire for him. We may not be able to say the word which we want to say; but in the church, where the Scriptures are read and the gospel is preached, he may hear the word which he needs. If it were an appreciation for music which we wished to cultivate in him, we probably would not argue with him about the excellence of the works of the masters, we would take him to concerts, to as many concerts as we could get him to attend cheerfully. We would not urge him against his will, but we would very persistently invite him. We would not expect much at the beginning: he would probably say a great many times that he would never go again, and would revile music on general principles, but he would go if we kept after him, and by and by he would hear with his ears, and rejoice with his heart, and be converted musically. That is the right thing to do with the friend whom we would bring to an appreciation of religion. We will bring him at least to the service. He ought never to be compelled to come in, but the Christian in the house ought never to go to church on Sunday without inviting the member of the family who does not commonly go. That unwearying, cheerful invitation will accomplish much.—Dean Hodges, in The Human Nature of the Saints.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. I will get ready, and then perhaps my chance will come.—Lincoln.

Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.—Jesus.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Tell the story of the way in which Jesus healed a palsied man. (Mk. 2.1-12.) 2. Whose daughter did Jesus raise to life? (Mk. 5.35-43.) 3. Where were Joppa and Lydda? 4. Why did the friends of Dorcas send for Peter? 5. Be on the lookout this week to see what you can do for some one in trouble.

LESSON IX—MAY 31

PETER AT LYDDA AND JOPPA

GOLDEN TEXT: And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Mark 16.20

LESSON Acts 9.32-43 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55.1-7

ACTS 9.32 And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda. 33 And there he found a certain man named Æneas, who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied. 34 And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose. 35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. 37 And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber. 38 And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not to come on unto us. 39 And Peter arose and went with them, and when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42 And it became known throughout all Joppa; and many believed on the Lord. 43 And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE CURE OF ÆNEAS, verses 32-35. Just as Peter and John had gone to Samaria to look into the work being done there by Philip the Evangelist, so Peter undertook, as we are now told, a journey of inspection to the Christian communities in the cities of the Maritime Plain. Jerusalem was still the center, and the apostles there must be kept in touch with the progress of the Kingdom elsewhere; therefore, as Chrysostom expressed it, like a commander of an army Peter went about inspecting the ranks. In the course of his tour he visited the saints at Lydda. We apply the word *saint* to one who is distinguished by extraordinary piety, but Luke uses it here as synonymous with the word *Christian.* The saint was one who was trying to obey the will of God and was working in his Kingdom; every disciple was a saint in that sense of the word.

> "Not the world-scorning anchorite,
> Not the new babe in garments white—
> Not these, God's types of saintlihood;
> But he who grasps the world for good,
> Takes hold of life, and men, and things,
> And all their best to fruitage brings" (James Buckham).

To a palsied man named Æneas, Peter said, "Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise and make thy bed." In Greek the word *bed* is not expressed; the words translated *make thy bed* mean literally, *spread for thyself.* The palsied man is directed to do for himself what others have long had to do for him. The bed was a mat, or rug, or sheep-skins sewed together, or a mattress made by stuffing a quilted coverlet with wool. On rising, the bed was made by rolling it up.

Recall Acts 4.10 and compare the words of Jesus to the palsied man, Mt. 9.6. "In both these miracles Peter's endeavor to assimilate his action to his Master's is plain." And at once this man who had been bedridden for eight years, arose. The miracle turned many in Lydda and in Sharon to the Lord.

II. THE RAISING OF DORCAS, verses 36-42. At Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha in Aramaic, the Greek translation of whose name was Dorcas, a woman known for her good deeds and charitable acts.

Dorcas was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did—not which she dreamed of doing. Possibly we imagine that we are full of good works because we think about them and plan to do them; the question is, Do we do them? What is your responsibility in regard to the suffering around you? Says Dr. Marcus Dods: "If you are given the opportunity, it will weigh heavily on your conscience in later years if you have done little or nothing by your own practical endeavors to lighten the burden of the poor,

to introduce justice and mercy into the relations of employer and employed, to replace squalor, disease, and hopelessness by comfort, health and enjoyment of life; in a word, to bring in the Kingdom of God on earth."

Dorcas died and the disciples sent for Peter, as Joppa was not far from Lydda. Whether they expected Peter to restore her to life, or only felt the need of his presence and sympathy, we cannot tell.

When others are in trouble, do they send for you?

As Peter entered the upper chamber where the body of Dorcas lay, he found many widows weeping there, and displaying the tunics and outer robes which she had made.

"There are a good many women who, when they die, will not have much crying at their funerals, for all the garments they leave behind them were made for themselves" (Margaret Bottome).

"Peter remembered how our Lord had cleared a death-chamber of noisy, professional wailers, and so he put forth the true mourners from the upper chamber where Dorcas was lying. He remembered the very Aramaic words with which Jesus had raised the daughter of Jairus, which are preserved to us in the Gospel which, in some sense, is supposed to be his: and again, he pleased himself, in a naïve and innocent fashion, by copying their very sound, and for that purpose availed himself of the Jewish, rather than the Greek name of the dead woman. Thinking of *Talitha cumi,* he said to her, *Tabitha cumi*—the change of one letter" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

The raising of Dorcas became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.

"I say that miracle was duly wrought
When, save for it, no faith was possible.
So faith grew, making void more miracles,
Because, too much, they would compel, not help" (Browning).

III. PETER BREAKS CASTE, verse 43. A third marvel we are now told—that Peter abode many days in Joppa with Simon a tanner. There had been a time when Peter would have slept out of doors rather than enter a tanner's abode. His Jewish exclusiveness was being shaken, and he was being prepared for the revelation that came to him here, as told in our next lesson. To touch a dead animal made a Jew "unclean" according to their laws, and tanners were therefore obliged to have their dwellings apart from others on the edge of a town. "The world cannot get along without tanners," said the rabbis, "but woe unto him who is a tanner!"

"What care I for caste or creed?
It is the deed, it is the deed;
What for class or what for clan;
It is the man, it is the man;
Heirs of love, and joy, and woe,
Who is high, and who is low?
Mountain, valley, sky and sea,
Are for all humanity."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

To desire to do good is positively dangerous unless one knows what it is good to do. No one of us can escape the application of this truth to his own service in any realm, however limited. To "take" a Sunday-school class is one thing, to teach it is another. To give money is one thing, to help people by giving it is another. To have friends is one thing, to be a master of effective friendliness is another. In particular, however, our truth is a challenge to all men and women to whom God has given special gifts of leadership. Blessings forever on that one, endowed with an alert and able mind, who uses his skill to guide bewildered folk, eager to serve but not knowing how, into wise uses of some new power that mankind possesses!—Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, in The Meaning of Service.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What have we heard this year about Peter? What was the first miracle which Peter wrought? To whom did he ascribe the power?

Reasons for the Cessation of Persecution. The events of our lesson occurred when the followers of Christ had peace throughout Syria. This was owing not only to the fact that Saul, their chief persecutor, had become himself a follower of the Nazarene, but also to the fact that the Jews were at this time so occupied with the trouble which the Roman Emperor Caligula was causing them that they had no time to concern themselves with the growth of the new religion.

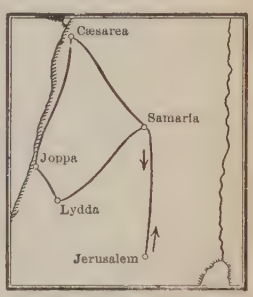
Caligula had ordered Petronius, the proconsul of Syria, to erect the emperor's statue in the temple at Jerusalem and dedicate it as to a god. Petronius came to Ptolemais where "ten thousand Jews" came to beseech him not to carry out his purpose. Here, and again at Tiberias, where Petronius went with his followers, the Jews declared that they would die before they would see their laws transgressed and their temple dishonored. War seemed imminent between the Jews and the Romans, but it was averted by the timely death of Caligula.

Peter's Journey. The care and supervision of the churches, scattered here and there during this period of rapid expansion, fell to the apostles, for the new Christian communities needed counsel and instruction. The date of Peter's visit to the churches of Lydda and Joppa is uncertain. It may have been 39 or 40 A.D., or even as early as 37 A.D.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The two cities of Joppa and Lydda were on the coast south of Mount Carmel. Lydda was "nigh unto Joppa," now eleven miles away on the railroad.

Joppa means *Beautiful,* and very attractive the city looks today from the deck of an approaching steamer, its white, flat-roofed houses climbing the terraced side of the hill and embedded in orange and lemon and palm trees, with the clear azure sky for a canopy. Its modern name is Jaffa, and it is connected by a railroad with Jerusalem, thirty miles away.



Map Showing Peter's Journeys

At the inn where we stayed the rooms are named instead of numbered, and I was glad to be quartered in the room called Tabitha. The so-called site of Tabitha's house is covered by a Greek Church, and near by is a rock-cut tomb designated as hers. In the southern quarter of the city is the traditional house of Simon the Tanner, whose courtyard has an ancient stone vat such as dyers have always used. An outside stairway leads to the roof, where one has just such a view of the sea as Peter had in his vision (our lesson for next Sunday).

It was to Joppa that Hiram, King of Tyre, sent cedars of Lebanon for Solomon's temple; it was from Joppa that Jonah set sail for Tarshish instead of going to Nineveh; it was at Joppa that Simon the Tanner and Dorcas lived.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE PLACE OF MIRACLES IN THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL

Beginning the Lesson. Over and over again we need to remind ourselves that, as St. Augustine long ago said, a miracle is not contrary to nature but only to what we know of nature. It is not contrary to the laws of God, but only to what we know of the laws of God. And of another truth, that a miracle which can be explained is just as much a miracle as one that cannot be explained.

Our lesson contains the report of two miracles wrought by Peter. What parallel to each miracle is related among the miracles wrought by Jesus?

In the Footpaths of Philip. It is a simple and natural question to ask, How came there to be saints at Lydda? Let us turn back to chapter eight, to the story of the Ethiopian eunuch and all that followed. The last verse reads, "Philip was found at Azotus; and passing through, he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea." If we trace Philip's journey from Azotus to Cæsarea on a map, we shall find that the direct road went through Lydda. I think it is a fair conclusion that Lydda was one of the cities where Philip preached. He had preached in Samaria and a church had been formed. He had preached to the Ethiopian eunuch, and had won him for Christ. He had gone to Azotus, and then started preaching through the cities. It is probable that his preaching in Lydda had been

the means of gathering together a number of those who believed in Christ. Here, then, were the saints at Lydda, the result, as I believe, of Philip's preaching.

Jaffa (Joppa) as it Looks Today

Then at Joppa lived Dorcas, whose ministry was that of deft fingers, inspired by a full heart. It was a great ministry. She gave herself to making garments for the poor. I think that here are the results of Philip's ministry. When the dispute arose in Jerusalem in the early days concerning the distribution of alms, the Hellenist widows complained that they were being neglected, and seven deacons were elected, men full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, to set this matter in order. Philip was the second man chosen. When he passed through the cities, I believe he not only preached the gospel so that men might be saved, but he showed the lines and directions along which the new Christian life should be used for the blessing of others. I think there is proof of Philip's ministry in the saints at Lydda, and in Dorcas and her beneficent operations in Joppa. Peter now passed over the ground and entered into the result of Philip's ministry.—Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.

The Place of Miracles in the Spread of the Gospel. In our recent study of his life, we saw that Jesus himself laid little stress upon the miracles he wrought. He did not always trust belief that was grounded on them alone, for John tells us that, "When Jesus was in Jerusalem at the passover, many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did. But Jesus did not trust himself unto them." It was a different kind of belief that Jesus wanted, a better and deeper faith, as when he said to Philip who asked for a "sign"—a sight of the Father—"Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake." The first alternative was the far higher, and he would have us believe in the works because we believe in him, not in him because we believe in the works. True, Jesus did send this word to John the Baptist: "Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them." All these miracles were evidences of his power, but the uniting with them his preaching of good tidings to the poor shows that in Jesus's mind they were evidences of his love, of his compassion that revealed the Father.

Nor did the apostles make great use of miracles to win followers to their belief in Jesus the Christ. Peter cured the cripple at the Beautiful Gate of the temple through sympathy such as actuated his Master in relieving distress. It was sympathy that led him to cure Æneas and restore Dorcas.

But the cure of Æneas led all that knew him to turn to the Lord, and when the restoration of Dorcas became known many believed on the Lord. The people of that age wanted miracles, or signs. Miracles were the great reason for faith. For them what was guaranteed by marvels was true, and miracles had an important place in the spread of the gospel.

What Is a Miracle? The simplest definition of a miracle given by a dictionary is "That which seems wonderful to those who witness it." Many things seemed wonderful to those of the first century which would not seem wonderful to us of the twentieth. We might possibly parallel the cure of Æneas with cures that are being accomplished today.

A fuller dictionary definition reads: "An act or happening in the material or physical sphere that apparently departs from the laws of nature or goes beyond what is known concerning these laws." We cannot parallel today the restoring of Dorcas to life. It is a happening which we cannot explain, which goes beyond what is known concerning the laws of nature, which is wholly outside the range of our experience.

Doubts in Regard to Miracles. It is in relation to the supernatural, or miraculous, element in the Bible that most doubts, and fears, arise. Many people honestly fear that the questioning of any miracle recorded in Scripture is endangering the

whole structure of Bible truth, and that the Book as a whole is discredited by the failure fully to believe any part; while here and there one finds people of unquestionable moral earnestness and high spirituality who have sought to order their lives according to the Sermon on the Mount and who have written the Thirteenth of First Corinthians in their souls, who none the less seem constitutionally incredulous of every reported occurrence that falls outside the realm of known law or natural phenomena. One recalls a saintly scholar who used to say, "I cannot believe in miracles because I believe in God." God was associated in her mind with unalterable law. To many the miraculous is not an aid, but a stumbling-block to faith.

Is it too much to say that both types may be God's children—those who are overcredulous and those who are unduly incredulous? There were doubters in Jesus's day, and he was very patient with them—much more patient than many who profess to be his official interpreters are with similar doubters today. Is doubt a sin? Or is honest doubt an attitude toward truth that God respects? Job was a great doubter. He doubted the religious philosophy of his friends, and it was in honestly speaking out his doubts to God that he came to fullness of faith and trust.—An Editorial in The Congregationalist.

The Evidence of God in the World Today. What the world needs today is a vital faith in a present, living God; in a God not of the dead, but of the living. Belief in miracles may impress us with God's power, but we are not impelled to greater love. As we ponder the miracle stories of the Old and New Testament, we are not stirred to greater devotion, except possibly through fear, for the nature miracles can have no other effect on the average normal mind than that of mystification and awe.

The existence of an orderly world confirms our faith in God more surely than the accounts of some unusual interruption to that order upon some spectacular occasion in the long ago. Granting that everything happened just as recorded in the Bible, it is not Joshua commanding the sun to stand still that convinces us of a God, but the fact that the sun rises every morning and shines upon the evil and the good. It is not the miraculous feeding of the Israelites by the coming of the quails and the manna that strengthens our belief in a supreme power, but the fact that "the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater." It is that continuous miracle that makes us cry out with the Psalmist of old: "What is man, O God, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?" In other words, we do not live in a haphazard world of chaos or chance; we live in a world of order and design and beauty, and God is constantly revealing himself in that sort of world, as he has always revealed himself to men.

The second fact is that God is within the soul of man. The proof which carries weight today is the evidence of an inner spiritual life being strong enough to overcome evil. True, noble, Christ-like living is the greatest evidence of God in the world today.

Therefore, in answer to the question: "Would God suspend the laws of nature to convince men that he exists?" we would say, first, that since we do not know all of the laws of nature we could not know whether any laws were being suspended. Certain laws unknown to us could supersede our own laws; for the miracles of yesterday become the common knowledge of today. And, second, since God is doing all possible to reveal himself to the world now, no other sign is necessary to establish our faith than that which has been vouchsafed humanity in nature, in history, in the life of Jesus, and in the witness of our own hearts.—P. L. Vernon, in The Christian Century.

For Discussion. 1. How Christianity is promoting the health of the world.

2. Whoso clearly appreciates all that is implied in the falling of a stone can have no difficulty about any doctrine simply on account of its marvelousness.—Huxley.

3. "To miracles of science pendants nod
Assent—denying only those of God."

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What commands of Jesus does Peter seem to have forgotten? 2. Why did the Jew consider himself superior to the Gentile? 3. Are Anglo-Saxons prone to consider themselves superior to other races? 4. Is it true, as has been said, that "the greatest menace to inter-racial good will is the Ku Klux Klan"? 5. Is the yellow peril or the yellow prejudice the greater menace?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
TWO GREAT MIRACLES

Beginning the Lesson. At the feet of a medical missionary a grateful father and mother knelt to worship her as a god, for she had restored their child to health. Hastily the missionary cried out to them, "We are not gods. Worship the true God."

"You must be a god," they said; "no one but a god could have saved our beloved child from death."

"Suppose," said the missionary, "that I wished to bestow a valuable gift upon you, and sent it by the hand of one of your coolies, whom would you thank, the coolie or me?"

"We should thank you, of course; the coolie is your servant."

"And so I am God's coolie, by whose hand God has been pleased to send you this gift of healing; and it is to him you must bow and give thanks."

When Peter was the means of healing the cripple at the Beautiful Gate, in whose name, in whose power, did he bid the cripple rise and walk? To whom did the man offer his grateful praise and thanksgiving in the temple?

When Peter was the means of the healing of a palsied man at Lydda, who did he say was the healer? What were the circumstances of this cure?

The Hand Is God's Hand. In a story by Alexander Irvine a woman just bereaved of a son has sought consolation from Anna, who tells her to ask God to lay his hand on her tired head.

"Wud he do it, Anna?"

"Well, just ask 'um, and then wait and see!"

In faltering tones Eliza made her request. As gently as falls an autumn leaf, Anna laid her hand on Eliza's head, held it there for a moment, and removed it.

"Oh, oh, oh, he's done it, Anna. He's done it. Glory be t'God, he's done it!"

"Th' han' was mine, Eliza, but it was God's, too. God takes a han' wherever he can find it and just duz what he likes wi' it. Sometimes he takes a biship's and lays it on a child's head in a benediction, then he takes th' han' of a dochter t'relieve the pain, th' han' of a mother t'guide her child, an' sometimes he takes th' han' of an auld craither like me t'give a bit of comfort to a neighbor. But they're all han's touch't be his Spirit, an' his Spirit is everywhere lukin' fur han's to use."

Miracles, Ancient and Modern. From Nazareth to Cana I passed, and on down the winding way from the "hill country" to blue Galilee. It was not the town of Tiberias that interested me, nor the "Simon Peter fish" mine host proudly set before us in the all too modern hotel. I wanted to wander alone down the pebbly shore of Gennesaret; to gaze out over those waters; to feast my eyes upon the white sails of the fishing boats, the bare hills of Gadara, and the misty mountains of Moab beyond. I wanted to walk on and on until a bend in the lake brought me to the grassy slopes that softly carpet the site of ancient Capernaum. The goats and I had it all to ourselves for an hour.

Alone? How can one be alone in Capernaum? A hundred familiar faces are all about me. A net is breaking yonder, with excited men waist-deep in water. A boat, overloaded with leaping fishes, is being drawn to the shore. And the women are there, too; I can name most of them.

Beyond that crowd at the water's edge a little ship is gently rocking to the little waves that come laughing in from the open lake to spray the feet of the multitude. A strange pulpit, that little ship—but these simple fishermen are listening to a sermon that will overthrow kingdoms.

And now they crowd him, up through the narrow streets of the city, crowding about to catch every word. Who is the man in flowing robes that hurries to meet him? "Master, my daughter is very ill. Speak the word, I beseech you, that she may live."

"Be of good cheer. She only sleeps. I will come."

Who does not love the story of Jairus? Who has not found comfort in those strange words, *"Talitha cumi"?* A miracle? Yes; but have miracles passed with the passing of Capernaum?

It is a pleasant day's ride by automobile down the Jordan Valley to Jericho; and another, winding in and out up the Jericho Road to the City of David.

One day the surgeon in charge of our hospital at Jerusalem invited me to be present at an operation. He had found a Syrian girl about fourteen years of age hobbling around on crutches. She had never walked. The good physician took compassion on her.

When she was under the ether I saw that a congenital deformity in both limbs had crippled her for life—or so it doubtless seemed to all who knew her. Then the merciful knife of the skilled surgeon touched the constricting ligaments. In sure but powerful hands the bones were forced into their natural places, the deformed feet reduced to their normal shape. Stout bandages, plaster casts, the bewildering awakening, and the long days in hospital waiting for Nature to do the rest.

Then came the morning when the deep Syrian eyes opened and looked up into the smiling eyes of the good physician. I did not hear him say, *"Talitha cumi,"* yet his words were no less certain, no less comforting to the parents who stood beside the little white cot. For her "feet and ankle-bones received their strength" and she went "walking and leaping and praising God" through the streets of the Holy City.—The Living Church.

The Helper of the Helpers.

The ways of the world are full of haste and turmoil:
I will sing of the tribe of helpers who travel in peace.
He that turneth from the road to rescue another,
Turneth toward his goal:
He shall arrive in due time by the footpath of mercy,
God will be his Guide.
He that careth for the sick and wounded,
Watcheth not alone:
There are three in the darkness together,
And the third is the Lord.
Blessed is the way of the helpers:
The companions of the Christ.—Dr. Henry van Dyke.

A Modern Dorcas. Before the war Jennie Lanning was a little, unknown English girl. The war came. It was a test that no one could escape—hero or coward, patriot or grafter. The war revealed the true selves of us all. It revealed the truth about the soul of Jennie Lanning. What could she do—one single girl—in the face of such awful need and agony? Those who know what she did do cannot believe that there was even a shadow of doubt or discouragement when she asked herself the tremendous question; for it is very clear that Jennie Lanning was of the invincible company whom no difficulties can daunt.

How she did it we over here do not know. But what she did was to get together the girls of London department stores until she had girls enough pledged to the work of caring for the needy wives and children of the men of one entire regiment.

The "boys" knew about Jennie, of course—scores of wives had written them. They went into the trenches with her courage making them strong. They wanted to tell her something about it—the way they felt about her. So they got together and had a ring made for her from the metal of a German shell. It was to be carried to her by the commander of the regiment, who was going home on leave.

Jennie never knew about the ring. On the very night when the officer reached London there was a Zeppelin raid, and Jennie was killed among the children for whom she was caring.

The end? Oh, no; such lives never end! It may be that Jennie Lanning's greatest work has only begun.—Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. The noblest question in the world is, What good may I do in it?—Benjamin Franklin.

Do all the good you can;
By all the means you can;
In all the ways you can;
In all the places you can;
To all the people you can;
As long as ever you can.—John Wesley.

Wherever a human being exists, there is an opportunity to do a kindness.—Seneca.

The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.—Robert Burns.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What impetuous words of Peter to his Lord are recalled by his words in verse 8? (Mt. 16.22). 2. What lesson did Peter learn from the vision? 3. What nationalities have you heard spoken of with scorn? 4. Is there any excuse for such scorn? 5. When a truth has been learned, to what should it lead?

LESSON X—JUNE 7

PETER'S BROADENING VISION

GOLDEN TEXT: Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. Acts 10.34

LESSON Acts 10.1 to 11.18 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 61.1-9

ACTS 11.5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even unto me: 6 upon which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw the fourfooted beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and birds of the heaven. 7 And I heard also a voice saying unto me, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. 8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth. 9 But a voice answered the second time out of heaven, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. 10 And this was done thrice: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 And behold, forthwith three men stood before the house in which we were, having been sent from Cæsarea unto me. 12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, making no distinction. And these six brethren also accompanied me; and we entered into the man's house: 13 and he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14 who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house. 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit. 17 If then God gave unto them the like gift as *he did* also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God? 18 And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. PETER CONDEMNED BY THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM, verses 1-4. The apostles and the brethren at Jerusalem heard that Peter had preached to Gentiles in Cæsarea, and on his return to Jerusalem they rebuked him, not for the preaching, but for having gone into the house of Gentiles and eaten with them—the scandal of it! "You went in to men uncircumcised and ate with them!" they exclaimed in horror. Up to this time Peter's authority had been unquestioned. It must have cut him to the quick to have his actions challenged. He did not quail, but justified his conduct, explaining the occurrences to them just as they had happened.

II. PETER'S VISION AND ITS LESSON, verses 5-10. Webster defines a trance as "A state in which the soul seems to have passed out of the body into another state of being, or to be wrapped in visions; an ecstasy." It was while Peter was praying in the city of Joppa that he fell into a trance and had a vision by which God taught him a great truth.

"How can God give us visions when life is hurrying at a precipitation rate? God has difficulty in getting us still. That is perhaps why he has sometimes employed the ministry of dreams. Men have had 'visions in the night.' In the daytime I have a divine visitor in the shape of some worthy thought, or noble impulse, or hallowed suggestion, but I am in such feverish haste that I do not heed it, and pass along. I do not 'turn aside to see this great sight,' and so I lose the heavenly vision. If I would know more of God, I must relax the strain and moderate the pace. I must be still" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

In his vision Peter saw a receptacle somewhat resembling a great sheet held up by the four corners, which was let down from heaven toward him. "The vision was evidently in its form and in its direction the result of previous natural circumstances. The death of Stephen must have had its effect on the apostle's mind. That truth for which he died, the transient character of Judaism, must have suggested strange new thoughts to be pondered on and doubted. Besides this, the apostle was in a state of hunger. In ecstasy, or trance, or vision, things meet for food presented themselves to his mental eye. Evidently the *form* in which this took place was shaped by his physical cravings, the *direction* depended partly on his previous thoughts concerning the opening question of the church. But the eternal truth, the spiritual verity conveyed by the vision, was clearly of a higher source. Here are the limits of the natural and the supernatural closely bordering on each other" (F. W. Robertson).

In the receptacle Peter saw all manner of beasts and creeping things and birds, and

he heard a voice bidding him rise, kill and eat. ("In the East the flesh-meat, which is never hung for days, like ours, is put in a great iron cooking-pot whilst the carcass is still warm, as indicated in this command.")

Peter was still self-willed, impulsive and vehement, and he cried out, "Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth." Recall Mt. 16.22 and Jn. 13.8. Levitical law prescribed what animals could be slaughtered for food and also the method of slaughter. While some of the animals seen in the vision were regarded by the Jews as clean, fit for eating, they had become unclean according to the Jewish belief by contact with other animals held to be unclean.

How strong this ingrained Jewish prejudice against eating food Levitically unclean is, is shown by the admission of a prominent rabbi who has been an active Christian for several decades that he has never brought himself to touch such food, although realizing that there is no reason why he should not eat it.

"When, by a marvelous vision of the plan of redemption that was to include the whole world, Peter was shown his task, he offered as an excuse for deep-seated racial prejudice that he had never done such a thing before. That time worn, battered excuse has been presented from that hour to this" (Zion's Herald).

A Voice spoke a second time out of heaven, and the message was: "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common." The vision might have been taken simply to mean that the Mosaic regulations as to meats were to be abolished in order that Jews and Gentiles might associate and eat together; but it had a deeper and wider significance—that no human creature was to be regarded as common or unclean, for God is no respecter of persons, 10.34.

And this was done thrice: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

Some persons can stand a great deal of repetition, especially men like Simon Peter.

III. THE VISION PUT INTO PRACTICE, verses 11, 12. Just at this juncture three men stood before the house and the Spirit bade Peter go with them.

"One of the great secrets of spiritual progress is to discern what the Holy Spirit's errand is for us in the immediate task. We must submit the present moment to his counsels. We must not dwell in some remote morrow and overlook the privilege that is near. As God gives us daily bread he also confers upon us a daily mission" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

With wise forethought unexpected in Peter, he took with him six Jewish believers as witnesses, and on reaching Cæsarea, entered into the man's house. The man was Cornelius, an army officer of the rank of centurion (captain), a Gentile. Fully grasping all the implications of the vision just vouchsafed to him, Peter realized the occasion for his summons.

"Great thoughts are in the air for those who are open-minded; noble impulses crowd the highway for those who are ready to receive and act upon them" (H. W. Mabie).

IV. THE NEED OF CORNELIUS, verses 13, 14. Peter reminded Cornelius that it was an unlawful thing for a Jew to join himself to one of another nation, and accounted for his presence by saying that he had been shown that God was no respecter of persons, and therefore he himself should not be.

And then Cornelius, in his turn, explained how he, a proud Roman, had sent for a Jew to give him enlightenment. An angel had come to him and bade him send to Joppa for Peter who would tell him how he and all his house might be saved. Cornelius was a God-fearing proselyte who observed the Jewish hours of prayer and whose prayers and alms were acceptable to God, 10.1-4. He was living in the best way he knew; he was not far from the Kingdom.

"God's angels wait for an open door. They find it when the soul becomes devout, the life charitable, and the spirit prayerful" (Samuel King).

"Thou hast well done that thou art come," Cornelius added. "Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord." Peter had been hungry when he had his vision of food, but he perceived that there were those who were hungry for the Bread of life which he could bring to them. And he preached unto them Jesus.

V. THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVEN TO THE GENTILES AND THEY ARE BAPTIZED, verses 15-17. God's approval marked Peter's words: "The Holy Spirit

fell on them, even as on us at Pentecost," said Peter. "Could I withstand God?"

"Peter had only to tell Cornelius of the Master's life, and to win his allegiance to the Lord and Savior of mankind, for the Spirit of love and unity to be poured out upon both alike. The power which unites people of diverse racial tradition and religious customs is the power of the Spirit. Jew and Gentile, Englishman and African, bond and free, may become one in Christ. We have here the all-sufficient warrant for Christian missions, and the adequate principle of Christian unity. Where Christ is known and loved, he brings a new Spirit before which racial barriers and animosities disappear; and where that Spirit is, should not the frank acknowledgment of oneness in fellowship be given? Any official reunion of Churches, on questions of faith and order, seems still a long way off; but can we not begin with the practical reunion of coöperating Christians who recognize in one another the Spirit of the Master?" (R. H. Coats).

Recalling the words of Jesus about being baptized in the Holy Spirit, Peter was convinced that God had set his seal upon the Gentiles; it was his Lord's will that they should be baptized and thus admitted into the fellowship of Jewish believers. He would have been fighting aganist God had he yielded to his natural impulse of prejudice and refused them this right. "Who was I?" he exclaimed to his accusers. "How could I withstand God?"

"It is a terrible thing to have seen the vision, and to be so wrapped up in its contemplation as not to hear the knock of needy hands upon our doors. It is a terrible thing to hear the knock and have no vision to declare to the poor knocker. But there is no greater happiness in all the world than for a man to love Christ for the mercy Christ has shown his soul, and then to open his whole heart outward and help to save his brethren's souls with the same salvation in which he rejoices for himself. May none of us go through life so poor as never to have known that happiness" (Phillips Brooks).

VI. THE INESCAPABLE CONCLUSION, verse 18. The facts of this epoch-marking incident had been told. There was only one conclusion which the Church at Jerusalem could draw—to the Gentiles also had God granted repentance unto life. All the doors into the house of salvation were flung wide open.

"There is now no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, and he is rich unto all that call upon him" (Paul).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How was Philip brought to the Ethiopian, and how was the Ethiopian prepared for his coming? How was Ananias brought to Paul, and how was Paul prepared for his coming? Into what regions had the gospel been carried up to the time we are studying? Who was the first convert outside of Judaism to be baptized? Where did Peter live while at Joppa? What did his going to such a house indicate?

A Great Question. The great question which the early Church had to settle was the question of admitting the Gentiles. The Church at Jerusalem was Jewish. At the point which we have reached in the onward movement, the gospel had been preached to the Samaritans—but they had Jewish blood in their veins and they kept the commands of Moses. Philip had taught and baptized the Ethiopian—but Philip was not one of the apostles; this, moreover, was only a special case. Now a new era was dawning, and a series of wonderful events changed the narrow Jewish-Christian religion into the universal Christian religion. The way in which the truth came home to Peter that the Gentiles also should have the gospel preached to them is the subject of our lesson today.

Two Accounts of the Reception of Cornelius, the Gentile. In chapters ten and eleven of The Acts we have two accounts of the way in which Cornelius and his household had the gospel preached to them and were baptized, Luke first recording events as they happened and then giving Peter's report of the events to the church at Jerusalem. The double account shows how significant Luke regarded this addition of Gentiles to the ranks.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

For *Joppa* see our last lesson. Next to Jerusalem, Joppa was the most Jewish town in all Judea, the least affected by Greek colonists. "Though Joppa was tributary to Herod, he never resided there, or tried to rebuild it, or plant heathen features upon

it," writes Dr. George Adam Smith. "Alone of the chief cities of the region it had no Greek or Latin name attached to it. In close commerce with Jerusalem, it was infected with the fanatic patriotism of the latter. To Jewish Joppa Peter came; and we can understand that, as he moved about its narrow lanes leading to the sea, where his scrupulous countrymen were jostled by foreign sailors and foreign wares, he grew more concerned than ever about the ceremonial law." He was in sore need here of the vision and its lesson which The Acts records.

Cæsarea was thirty miles north of Joppa. It was the capital of the Roman province of Judea. It was the residence of the governor, or procurator as he was called, and the headquarters of Roman troops. Herod the Great had built the city on the Mediterranean coast at the northern extremity of the Plain of Sharon and had named it Cæsarea Augusta in honor of the Emperor Augustus Cæsar.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Peter saw the vision and then he carried out the task. Divine visions, great truths, are not for enjoyment or instruction only; they are preparatory to service. Christians are the agents for carrying out God's purposes. These are great truths which all pupils should see in the lesson of today.

We grow wiser by receiving higher ideals, but unless we try to execute them we do not grow better. It is natural for a little child to attempt at once to put his good impulses into action. This natural tendency should be encouraged. To hold up lofty visions of the good and true to children of large growth is easy; to arouse their good impulses is usually easy; but to lead those impulses to their fruition in action usually requires considerable thought and skill on the leader's part. Teach them to recognize visions when they come, and to be on the lookout for opportunities of putting them into practice.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

THE GOSPEL INTENDED FOR ALL MEN

Beginning the Lesson. When the Pharisees and scribes asked Jesus why his disciples did not live up to "the tradition of the elders" and scrupulously wash their hands before eating, he accused them of leaving the commandment of God and holding fast to the tradition of men. And turning to the multitude he solemnly said: "Hear me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing from without the man that goeth into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man."

His disciples later asked him to explain his words. "Are ye so without understanding also?" he asked. "Perceive ye not, that whatsoever from without goeth into the man, it cannot defile him, because it goeth not into his heart?" *This he said, making all meats clean,* the evangelist adds.

If Peter had understood the lesson then, he had speedily forgotten it. A vision was needed to bring the truth home to him, and with it a far greater truth.

We know how great was Jewish prejudice against tanners. Their occupation made them Levitically "unclean," and yet Peter had spent several days at Joppa in Simon the tanner's house. This fact proves that there was working in his mind the leaven of liberal mindedness, which would soon allow him to hail all men everywhere as brothers.

Oliver Wendell Holmes says that the mind of a bigot is like the pupil of the eye, the more light you pour upon it the more it contracts. Peter was not a bigot. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him," was the great lesson which he learned. The gospel is intended for all men. (Continue with The Text Explained.)

Agents of God. What a wonderful drama is unfolded to us in the story of Peter and Cornelius! In all the fairy-tales of fiction there is nothing to approach it. Novelists have told us of extraordinary meetings at extraordinary moments, but no novelist has ever told a story like this. Here are two men being secretly impelled towards each other, with the destinies of continents hanging on their meeting. The history of the world entered upon a fresh phase as they met. The two men were resistlessly thrown into each other's arms in fulfilment of a tryst of which neither was aware, and in the very teeth of all their ingrained racial piques and prejudices.

And when they clasped hands, then, for the first time in history, Jews and Gentiles were all one in Christ Jesus.

As Peter journeyed one day along the seashore from his own lodging at Joppa to Cornelius at Cæsarea, the tossing waves were witnessing a romance of nations. A thing was happening that would pour the stream of empire into new channels. The history of the world was being overhauled and recast. Yet neither of these men knew that they were but pawns upon a board, puppets of a higher will, carrying into fruition and fulfillment the struggling purposes of countless ages.—F. H. Boreham, in The Golden Milestone.

Racial and Other Prejudices of Today. Some years ago Professor Geddes and his family of Edinburgh moved into a slum district in order to do friendly work among the poor. One evening he invited a distinguished statesman to dine at his house with a chimney-sweep and a scavenger, and the statesman accepted with pleasure. The scavenger agreed to come, but the chimney-sweep refused to sit down with the scavenger!

"I don't see why the public schools teach the children of common people art and music," said a well-dressed clubwoman. "They would much better teach them to use their handkerchiefs." A teacher who was present reported the speech the next day to her comrades. "Who does she think she is? Her father was a brewer!" exclaimed a young teacher from the South. Then an older teacher raised her hands and said: "My dears, we are all 'gutter cats.' Give us three days in the parlor and we will order the bishop himself out of the softest chair when he comes calling."

There was a reason, though not an excuse, for the caste feeling of the Jews as regards the Gentiles. The lofty pride with which they looked down on the Gentiles was not merely the result of ignorant bigotry. Its strength, as Professor Ramsay says, lay in this, that the Jew stood both morally and intellectually on a far higher level than the Gentile. There is the same reason, likewise not an excuse, for the caste feeling of the white population of our land who look down on the black.

Dr. Booker T. Washington found the difference a golden opportunity for the white people. "We have not only to get the negro on his feet," he said; "we have to fit him for civilization, so that there will be peace and harmony and helpful relations between blacks and whites. When two races live side by side, one strong and the other weak, the great difficulty is to prevent the strong race from feeling that its interests are the only interests to be considered. The world is fast learning that of all forms of slavery there is none that is so hurtful and degrading as that form which tempts one human being to hate another by reason of his race or color. One man cannot hold another man down in the ditch without staying down in the ditch with him."

The negro, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Hindu, the Slav, the Jew, and all others, wherever they came from, are entitled to fair and honorable treatment in every land. Some one thought to make an all-inclusive statement when he laughingly said that the millennium will come when a ball game is played between the Ku Klux Klan and the Catholics with a negro as umpire for the benefit of Ford's Jewish workmen. Yet another statement is needed to make merry over other prejudices of ours.

In a set of resolutions adopted by the World's Sunday School Convention held in Tokyo in 1920 are these which should be adopted by every Church-school:

"We affirm our unshaken belief in the solidarity of the human race, and further affirm our conviction that any conception of racial or national integrity that ignores this basic fact, imperils the security of the world.

"We attest our confidence in the practicabiltiy of a world brotherhood, and hold that fealty to the principle of the common good is more cohesive than mere similarity in customs, habits, and manners."

Learning New Lessons. It was God who bade Peter break away from past traditions. And in all Scripture, I do not know a passage fuller of comfort for us, as we look out, often with sinking hearts, upon the changes in doctrine and practice that are going on around us. I cannot think why the Church has not caught firm hold of this message, and spoken it with a trumpet in the ears of the disheartened. For here we have God himself engineering what his perplexed servant regards as nothing short of a revolution!

We have only to look back a little way in history to see how we have shifted ground. The God of the eleventh century, Anselm's God, is not our God today. Calvin's God, Jonathan Edward's God, is not our God today. And the Author of the change, the Giver of the vision, is the Lord himself. That's the point. That's the comfort.

Don't miss it, one of you. The Author of the change is the Lord himself. Well, then, have we reached finality, think you? Is our horizon the broadest that ever shall be? Are our doctrines full and perfect? Are all our labels sacred, never to be taken off?

Once, we are told, Spain stamped upon her coins the Pillars of Hercules, and took as her motto, *Ne Plus Ultra*—No more beyond. But when the bold spirit of Columbus passed beyond these pillars, and discovered the New World, Spain omitted the *Ne*, and left *Plus Ultra*—more beyond. And that's the only motto which is worthy of those who believe that it is God himself who is moving the world and men up the long slope of history and progress. No matter how far we have come, no matter how much we have learned of God or of the Spirit of Jesus, the word is still *Plus Ultra*. There's more beyond!—Condensed from a Sermon by Archibald Alexander.

The Right Kind of Broadmindedness. Illiberality of mind sometimes reveals itself in an orthodoxy that prevents a man from looking calmly and boldly at the religious questions which the circumstances of the age may bring into discussion; sometimes it reveals itself in a harsh, exclusive denominationalism; sometimes in an ascetic strictness of life which causes a man to think and speak intolerantly about all enjoyments and recreations; sometimes it shows itself in a fear of worldly conformity, that exaggerates the mint, the anise, and the cummin of ecclesiastical law and obedience. Let us beware of narrowness that is really of a suspicious, conceited, uncharitable spirit. Let us hold a broad theology—a theology as wide as judgment, mercy, and truth; let us belong to a broad Church, a Church so wide that it will give space to all the genuine powers and passions of our large, manifold humanity. Let not our spirit be mistrustful, critical, censorious, prohibitive, but hopeful, sympathetic, tolerant. Jesus Christ stood at the utmost remove from the prudish, pedantic, carping, pettifogging Pharisee; he, above all men, had broad sympathies, largeness of mind, magnanimity; he was the ideal Catholic. Let it be thus with us. Let us live with holy liberty and confidence and charity. Let us be broad, yet pure; broad, yet true; broad, yet intense and enthusiastic in the service of our Lord.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson, in Noon Day Addresses.

For Discussion. 1. Racial prejudices. See The Caste System of North America, Atlantic Monthly, March, 1923; The Difficult Art of Being a Jew, Outlook, January 10, 1923.

2. What makes a Christian? "The official churches answer, according to their respective tenets: 'Baptism,' 'The acceptance of a Christocentric creed,' 'Episcopal orders,' 'The recognition of the Pope'—and appeal to the Scriptures and the authority of tradition. The one thing necessary, however, at Cæsarea was the evidence of existing spiritual life. So it is also today."

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What were the dominant traits in the character of Barnabas 2. What was the greatest work that Barnabas performed? 3. Why might a smaller man have hesitated to summon Paul to the work? 4. In what respects is Barnabas an example for Christian workers? 5. Compare Barnabas and Paul.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS

PETER'S BROADENING VISION

Beginning the Lesson. A traveler in India had an amusing experience at Bareilly. On entering a native home she saw a mouse seated on a plate of cooked rice. The food had been placed on the floor preparatory to the noon-day meal. She stepped forward to drive the mouse away, but the Hindu woman screamed with horror lest the Englishwoman should touch the purified section of the floor where the food was and thus render all impure. The mouse, however, could remain and eat from the plate without defiling food or floor.

There were some kinds of food which the Jews would never touch because they were forbidden by their law. When they went on a journey they took food with them lest by chance they should eat food that was forbidden, or "unclean," as they called it. Nor would they eat with Gentiles, for that, too, would make them "unclean." In one of Shakespeare's plays Shylock says to Bassanio: "I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you," and such has always been the spirit of strict Jews.

The apostles were all strict Jews, you know, and they thought it wrong to eat

certain kinds of meat or to eat with Gentiles. The first one of them to learn that this exclusiveness of theirs was not God's will for them, was Peter. How was he taught the lesson?

Peter's Broadening Vision. See The Text Explained.

A Brahman's Broadened Vision. While taking part as a visitor in a service in a native church in India, a missionary witnessed a most impressive incident.

The native pastor was administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to a large body of native Christians. As the missionary looked at the congregation he noticed the dignified figure of a high-class Brahman who both in his face and in his bearing showed his aristocratic descent. Sitting beside him was a low-caste Hindu who bore in his person unmistakable signs of his lowly birth; in his figure, in his features, in his clothing and in the way he carried himself he revealed the mental and spiritual poverty of his forbears. In those two men the missionary recognized an example of the supreme social problem of India and indeed of the world.

Soon the native pastor, bearing the sacred elements, approached the two men and instinctively recognizing the superiority of the Christian Brahman, offered the bread and wine to him instead of to the low-caste worshiper. But with simple dignity the Brahman, passing the elements to the other man, gently insisted that he partake of them first.

A moment later the missionary saw the Brahman take the cup from his fellow worshiper and deliberately put his lips to the very place on the rim whence his low-caste brother had drunk! Nothing that he could have done would more clearly have shown his Christian humility. The pure stream of the Divine Love that poured itself out at Calvary for all mankind had swept away the inherited prejudice of centuries that teaches that the touch of the low-caste Hindu is utter pollution for the Brahman.

"It is the beginning of the end for caste," thought the missionary. "Love conquers all."—The Youth's Companion.

The Broadening Vision that All Need. A prominent lawyer in New Orleans was no less noted for his tolerance than for his legal knowledge. To a friend who once expressed wonder that this trait was so highly developed in him, he said:

"If I have a charitable temper, I owe it to a chance remark of an old uncle of mine when I was a boy. He saw me one day torturing a frog, and said, meditatively, 'Now I wonder why you do that? You are kind to dogs, birds and rabbits.' I replied that the frog was hideous, filthy and useless.

"'Yes, perhaps so,' he said, in the same reflective tone. 'It belongs to a different family from you. It has not the hereditary traits of the dog, the rabbit or the man. But it is not a trait of a frog to fight or despise another creature because it is not like itself. That is the mean, senseless vice of a man.'

"I thought over the remark a long time, trying to understand exactly what he meant by it. After that day I never threw a stone at a frog; and I learned to apply his meaning to the men and women around me."

The girl who at school thinks and talks from another point of view than yours is not to be depised or ridiculed or disliked. She has been placed by God in another family. So has the man of another religion or political creed, who crosses your path in after life, or the foreigner, or the woman whose skin is yellow or red or black, while yours is white. Each of them knows his own standing ground, his own blessings and temptations, his own duty to God and his fellows. To his own master he stands or falls. It is for you always to help, but never to judge him—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. If we knew our brother as God knows him, we should never dare to despise him—G. H. Morrison.

To render a service to anyone is the highest remedy for prejudice against him.—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where was Phœnicia? 2. Cyprus? 3. Antioch? 4. Why would not the church in Jerusalem be pleased on learning that the gospel was preached to Gentiles? 5. How did Barnabas show his generosity early in the history of the believers at Jerusalem? 6. What had Barnabas already done for Paul? 7. What do the words of Barnabas in verse 23 mean? 8. When we studied the lives of the great men and women of the Bible two years ago, Barnabas was called the Great-Hearted: how did he deserve this title?

LESSON XI—JUNE 14

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH

GOLDEN TEXT: The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Acts 11.26

LESSON Acts 11.19-30 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 12

ACTS 11.9 They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. 20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus, and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord. 22 And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch: 23 who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord: 24 for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. 25 And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul; 26 and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

27 Now in these days there came down prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius. 29 And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judæa: 30 which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. GOOD OUT OF EVIL, verses 19-21. Luke now looks backward in his narrative. Recalling the trouble that arose after the stoning of Stephen, he tells us that it resulted in the disciples' being scattered abroad. "The persecution turns out to be a missionary society unconsciously organized by the foes of the new faith" (Dr. Lynn H. Hough). The persecuted disciples fled to Phœnicia and the island of Cyprus and Antioch in Syria, and everywhere they preached to the Jews and won new converts. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

Some of the disciples who went to Antioch were Greek-speaking Jews, natives of Cyprus and Cyrene, whose residence among Gentiles had made them more liberal than were the Hebrew-speaking Jews of Palestine. These humble and unwearied disciples took a great forward step in the history of the Church—they preached to the Greeks at Antioch also, telling them about the Lord Jesus.

(The interpretation of this whole event at Antioch hinges upon the meaning of the word translated *Greeks.* In the Greek there are two words: *Hellenistes,* a Hellenist or Greek Jew, a Jew by descent and training and religion but born outside of Palestine under Greek influence; and *Hellenis,* a Greek, a Gentile. Both words occur in different manuscripts. Our Revisers accepted the second word, and the interpretation therefore is that the gospel was preached to Gentiles.)

"Thus simply does the historian tell one of the greatest events in the history of the Church. It needed a vision to overcome the scruples of Peter, and impel him to the bold innovation of preaching to Cornelius and his household, and, as we know, his doing so gave grave offense to some of his brethren in Jerusalem. But in the case before us, some Cypriote and African Jews—men of no note in the Church, whose very names have perished, with no official among them, with no vision to impel them, with no precedent to encourage them, with nothing but the truth in their minds and the impulses of Christ's love in their hearts—solved the problem of the extension of Christ's message to the heathen, and, do the thing about the propriety of which there had been such serious question in Jerusalem. They had no special injunction to 'preach the Lord Jesus.' They believed, and therefore spoke. They found themselves rejoicing in a great Savior—Friend. They saw all around them men who needed him, and that was enough. They obeyed the promptings of the voice within, and laid the foundations of the first Gentile Church. Such an impulse is ever the natural result of our own personal possession of Christ" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

The hand of the Lord was with them, Luke adds. The *hand* is the symbol of power; the workers had back of them God's omnipotence, so that a large number believed and turned unto the Lord.

"We do not labor alone; however feeble our hands, that mighty Hand is laid on them to direct their movements and to lend strength to their weakness. It is not our speech that will secure results, but his presence with our words which will bring it about that ever through them a great number shall believe and turn to the Lord. There is our encouragement when we are despondent. There is our rebuke when we are self-confident."

II. ENCOURAGEMENT OF A GOOD WORK, verses 22-24. We can readily understand that this revolutionary step did not please the church at Jerusalem. They had acquiesced in the baptising of the Gentile Cornelius and his household, after Peter had convinced them that the hand of God was in the incident, but here the number of the Gentiles was alarming. Instead of hastily condemning the new movement, however, they sent a man to investigate the situation in whose sagacity and goodness they had entire confidence. This man was Barnabas, who had so generously contributed to the expenses of the early community at Jerusalem, and who had understood Paul and had vouched for his sincerity when he first came to Jerusalem after his conversion. Barnabas was a Levite and could understand Hebrew prejudices, but he was a Hellenist and could approach the situation sympathetically.

When Barnabas saw the grace of God—the genuineness of the conversion of the Gentiles, or else the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, as in 10.45—he was glad. Luke adds that Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.

It is the mark of a good man to rejoice in good work, whether done in the customary way or not. "There was more in Barnabas than hospitality to new men," declares W. Mackintosh Mackay. "There was also a hospitality to new ideas. And that we all need, especially as we grow older. We tend to get hidebound in our ideas, narrow, reactionary, obscurant. We need to remember that God's Spirit is always at work—often in quite new ways from the past. If the Church is to thrive, it must seek to adapt itself to the ever-varying condition of things. Therefore, like Barnabas, let us ever give the right hand of fellowship to the new man, the new movement, or the new method, if it is plainly blessed of God."

Barnabas exhorted the converts with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord.

Conversion is the beginning, not the end: he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

III. THE GREATEST THING BARNABAS DID AT ANTIOCH, verses 25, 26. Through the efforts of Barnabas the Church at Jerusalem had accepted Paul as a brother after his conversion, but had not entrusted to him any great task. For ten or twelve years now he had been working in Syria and Cilicia. Now Barnabas needs help in Antioch. The need is urgent—the door of opportunity is opening to the whole Gentile world. Barnabas knows just the right man for the place, one who has the necessary breadth of mind and sympathy of heart, a Hellenistic Jew like himself, familiar with the Greek language and culture and thought. He finds Paul at Tarsus and brings him to Antioch. And thus it comes to pass that the man who was instrumental in driving from Jerusalem the disciples who founded this church at Antioch, comes to help them in their work.

"One mark of a real generosity of soul is the absence of jealousy; a man is very far on in grace when it can be said of him that he is never jealous. 'Love,' says Paul, 'envieth not.' Barnabas was so generous that he had no room for envy in his heart. When he went to Tarsus for Paul and brought him back to Antioch he knew quite well what he was doing. He had not forgotten the old days when Paul carried all before him. He knew Paul was much the abler and stronger man. He knew if Paul came to Antioch he must inevitably take first place. But Barnabas never heeded that. All he cared for was the progress of the work. And perhaps this is the ultimate evidence of Barnabas's goodness. Because envy lurks even in good men's souls" (Dr. J. D. Jones).

Instead of returning to Jerusalem to report concerning the situation in Antioch, Barnabas stayed on with Paul a whole year and continued the splendid work begun by the men of Cyprus and Cyrene.

IV. THE NEW NAME, verse 26. The disciples were called Christians, Christ's men, first at Antioch. They had called themselves disciples, learners, saints, consecrated to God; the faithful, the believers; brethren, sons of one Father. Hitherto they had been only a special Jewish sect, for practically all were either Jews or

Jewish proselytes. Now, however, a name was needed that should include both Jews and Gentiles, and should be descriptive of their belief. This new term of *Christians* was not adopted by the disciples themselves during the history recorded in The Acts. It is used only twice again in the New Testament: Acts 26.28; 1 Pet. 4.6.

It has been thought that *Christians* was a nickname given by the people of Antioch in derision, in the same spirit as since then have been given the now honored names of *Protestant, Puritan, Wesleyan, Methodist.* The Greek word for Christ is *Christos* and it is very similar to another Greek word *Chrestos,* which was sometimes used ironically for "a good fellow." The people of Antioch were noted for their witty epigrams, and in their term of *Christianoi* there may have been a play upon words. On the other hand, it may have been only natural that they called the followers of Christ, Christ's men, just as they called the followers of Pompey, Pompey's-men, or Pompeiani.

Christians, Christ's men, Christ-like—such, O Lord Jesus, may we be in deed and in truth. Help us who bear thy name to be worthy of it; to be so free from selfishness and pride and envy and malice and guile as to be Christians in spirit; to live so close to thee in thought and prayer as to be Christians in faith; and to be so active in thy service as to be Christians in work, God's separated men and women, boys and girls, doing the work whereunto thou hast called even us.

V. THE LIBERALITY OF THE CHRISTIANS AT ANTIOCH, verses 27-30. Among the prophets, or teachers, who came to Antioch at this time from Jerusalem, was Agabus (mentioned again in Acts 21.10, 11), who declared that a great famine was coming over the world; which came to pass in the days of Claudius (41-54 A.D.). The wealthier Jews of the Dispersion were accustomed to send relief to the poorer Jews of Palestine during times of famine or trouble. The Jewish Christians in Judea were not likely to receive aid in this way, and at once the Gentile Christians in Antioch took steps to raise money for them. As Paul afterwards said in regard to a collection for the same purpose sent by the Christians of Macedonia and Achaia: "It hath been their good pleasure; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things."

From verses 29 and 30 this lesson has been drawn upon the matter of giving: It was universal—every man; proportionate—according to his ablity; voluntary—determined; practical—to send relief; prompt—which they did; business-like—to the right people by the right people; done lovingly—to brethren.

The sum raised was sent by the hands of Barnabas and Paul to the elders at Jerusalem. Where were the apostles? It has been surmised that they had fled, but it is probable that the elders, not apostles, are mentioned because "the embassy was of a purely business kind, and it was not fit that the apostles should serve tables." These Christian elders held in all probability no new kind of office; but theirs was a continuation in the Christian Church of the office of presbyters, to whom probably the government of the synagogue was assigned.

"The sending of money to Jerusalem seems a small matter, yet if bearing one another's burdens was really fulfilling the law of Christ, it was a practical assertion of unity. It had the additional advantage of increasing the intercourse between the two bodies, the interchange of ideas, the removal of prejudice based on ignorance, the increase of knowledge, the growth of intimacy and mutual hospitality. This happy precedent was soon followed. Thirteen years later we find the churches of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Achaia carrrying out the same ideal" (John Elliott Symes).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What led Philip and others to preach the gospel in Samaria? Whom did the Church at Jerusalem send to investigate the work? What was the report? Who was Stephen? What had Paul had to do with Stephen? What is the first thing recorded of Barnabas? What part had Barnabas had in Paul's life? Where was Paul born? Where did we leave him in our lesson three weeks ago?

The Second Birthplace of Christianity. In chapters nine and ten we have heard how, as a consequence of the scattering of disciples from Jerusalem because of the persecution which followed upon the martyrdom of Stephen, the gospel was

carried to other parts of Palestine. Now we hear how it was carried beyond Palestine as far as Antioch in Syria, and of the way in which Christianity became no longer a sect of Judaism but a new religion. It was a tremendous innovation—the preaching to Gentiles in Antioch, and because of its influence upon later events Antioch has been called the second birthplace of Christianity.

The Date. The date of the journey of Barnabas and Paul to Jerusalem with relief funds is generally given as 44 or 45 A.D.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Phœnicia was the long strip of level country northwest of Galilee between the Lebanon Mountains and the Sea, which was part of the Roman Province of Syria. Tyre and Sidon were its important cities.

Cyprus is the large island in the Mediterranean south of Asia Minor. *Cyrene* was the capital of Libya, west of Egypt. For Tarsus, see page 176.

Antioch was on the Orontes in northern Syria, sixteen miles from the coast, where it had a seaport called Seleucia. It was the capital of the province of Syria and one of the most famous cities of the ancient world. With a population of half a million, it ranked as the third largest and wealthiest city of the Roman Empire, Rome being the first and Alexandria the second. The main street which, like the Street called Straight of Damascus, ran for five miles directly through the city, was paved with blocks of white marble and lined with double colonnades of marble. "Trees, flowers and fountains adorned the promenade, and poets sang of the beauty of the statue of Apollo and of the Nymphæum erected near the river." The majority of the population were Syrians, but they spoke the Greek language. As it was the seat of the Roman Governor, there were large numbers of Romans in the city, and the Jews, who had been given equal rights of citizenship with the Macedonians and Greeks on the founding of the city about 300 B.C., formed a considerable community.

Allegorical Statue of Antioch
The city is represented as a crowned queen, seated on a rock; the figure at her feet represents the Orontes

To Antioch came the richly-laden caravans from Persia and India. Read the account in Ben Hur. It was a city of great luxury and equally great wickedness. So notorious was it for its shameless corruption that Juvenal, the satirist, characterized the degradation of Rome by saying that "the Syrian Orontes has flowed into the Tiber." "Such a city was a field white for the harvest," observes a writer, "gasping like a thirsty land for a renovating and life-giving gospel, and the large fringe of Gentile adherents which hung around the synagogues offered the Christian evangelist a golden opportunity."

This city, where Christianity was first preached to Gentiles in large numbers, and where the disciples were first called Christians, became "the mother church" of the Gentile Christians, as Jerusalem was "the mother church" of the Jewish Christians. It was the starting-point from which Paul set out on his three great missionary journeys.

In the later history of the Church, Antioch became famous for its school of theology. Ignatius the martyr was bishop here, and Chrysostom, who was later Patriarch of Constantinople (died in 407), was a native of Antioch. In the third and fourth centuries ten church councils were held here.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

How indebted we are to Barnabas, as the agent of God, for setting Paul upon his wonderful career of usefulness! There are people everywhere today whose talents are lost to God's Kingdom because no Barnabas has brought them out of their hiding places. A Sunday-school teacher has a fine opportunity for being a Barnabas, a friend of the retiring folk, a bringer into light of great workers in God's vineyard. Have you a singer among your pupils whose gift can be used in

God's house? Have you a thoughtful pupil who should be trained for leadership? Is there a quiet, retiring man or woman in your class who needs to be brought out of a modest corner that he may serve?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE SECRET OF A GROWING CHURCH

Beginning the Lesson. The Jewish historian of the first century, Josephus, speaks of Jesus as an obscure man who gathered about him a small company of deluded followers, and adds, "The sect named after him is not extinct to this day." Today there are hundreds of millions of "the sect," and their number is constantly increasing. It was at Antioch in Syria that these followers of Christ were first named after him Christians—in derision, it is thought. What other names first given in derision have since been held in the highest esteem?

The term "Methodist" was a nickname given to the members of a club at Oxford "because they observed a more regular method of study and behavior than was usual with those of their age and station." John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, heartily disliked the name and wished that it "might never be mentioned more, but be buried in eternal oblivion." But the name could not be buried, and when Wesley published a dictionary he defined a Methodist as "One who lives according to the method laid down in the Bible."

How did it happen that there were Christians among the Gentile population of Antioch? (Text Explained.)

How the Church at Antioch Developed. There is the note of continuity. Every movement is the outgrowth of an earlier one. Stephen's martyrdom was Antioch's opportunity. Saul's apprehension on the way to Damascus was Antioch's supply. An Antioch's spiritual blessing became Judea's material succor in the hour of famine. These things of God are all linked together.

Secondly, there is the note of absolute freedom. Every movement is a new departure. Preaching to Greeks was a new movement. The sending of Barnabas by the apostles was a new official action. The finding of Saul by Barnabas was an independent action.

Then again, there is the note of perpetual variety. There was a great variety of gifts. There was the apostolic gift, the evangelistic gift, the prophetic gift, and the pastoral gift.

In this paragraph from The Acts we have the microcosmic revelation of true Christian work and missionary development. Every new departure is a continuation of something which has gone before. How can we fulfil any Christian service that is not linked to the magnificent past? I believe in the holy catholic Church, and that every piece of work today is linked to the things that have gone before. But there must be freedom from the restraint of the past, freedom from the interferences of hoary and ancient traditions; for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. There must also be absolute freedom. Every new departure is independent, in that it is under the impulse and inspiration of the Spirit, and is the test of the Church's unity. There are also varieties of gifts. The Spirit of God is still bestowing gifts for apostolic, pioneer work in distant lands; for prophetic declaration of God's truth to this age; for evangelistic calling of men to Christ; or for the patient teaching and training of the saints.—Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, in The Acts of the Apostles.

The Growth of the Church in Antioch. Evangelism changed the morals of the city—licentiousness was rebuked, extravagance was checked, Greek æstheticism and Oriental luxury were discounted, by the soul-saving group which showed the people a more excellent way. The people saw the difference and abandoned the old for the new. Schaff says that at the time of Chrysostom half of the population were Christians.

Evangelism changed the center of Christianity. Ten "Church Councils" met in Antioch 252-380. The patriarch took precedence over the patriarch of Jerusalem. Libanus, Marcellus, and Chrysostom came from Antioch. From here Ignatius started on his march to martyrdom in Rome.—Dr. W. A. McDaniel, in The Church of the New Testament.

That is a Growing Church where Every One is at Work. Over the doorway of a home for friendless children in Switzerland are inscribed these words, "God has a Plan for Everyone." There is no one so friendless, so poor, so helpless, so neglected, so young, but God has a plan for him, a part in the world's great work for him to do. It is easy to see that Barnabas and Paul were doing a great work in the

church at Antioch, but that work was instituted by men of Cyprus and Cyrene who were not deemed of sufficient importance to be even named in the record of the founding of the church.

If everyone were to work zealously in any church, great things would result. Not every one can preach, but every one can bear witness to the faith which is in him. And every one can say a good word for the church and what it stands for, and can bring others to the church services. Everyone can do some worth-while work in the church, whether it be to teach a class in the Church-school, lead a Boy Scout or Girl Scout troop, work in the young people's societies or in the adult societies, sing in the choir, act as usher, or "serve tables."

If the desire of every church member were to do his utmost rather than his least in the work of the church, the church would grow by leaps and bounds, for as at Antioch, the hand of the Lord would be with them. "The Church is never faithful to her calling unless she has her hands upon a task too great for human strength to accomplish."

Strong Leadership Is One Secret of a Growing Church. The church at Antioch was deficient in leadership. Barnabas needed a colleague, and he looked about for the ablest leader he could find. He himself had come from Jerusalem, but he did not send there for a helper. He knew that over in Tarsus was the greatest man of the age, and he went there for him. Results in Antioch immediately justified his judgment. Under the leadership of Paul and Barnabas the church grew mightily.

When Mr. Roosevelt was President of the United States, Mr. John R. Mott asked his aid in presenting to the young men in our colleges the need of the ablest and most vigorous type of men for Christian leadership. The need appealed strongly to the President. From his reply the following words are condensed:—

Small, narrow, one-sided men, no matter how earnest, cannot supply leadership for the moral and religious forces which alone can redeem nations. They can do good in their own way; but in addition to them, the strongest are needed—men of marked personality who to tenderness add force and grasp, who show capacity for friendship, and who to a fine character unite an intense moral and spiritual enthusiasm.

Every great city calls with insistent longing for leaders able and willing to suffer and fight, to show fortitude and daring, to grapple with iron will and undaunted front the terrible evils that grow up where men are crowded together, where life is led under a constant and feverish strain, where great wealth and biting poverty jostle one another. The service can be rendered in the ministry, as I have known it to be rendered by Protestant clergyman and Catholic priest, aye, and by Jewish rabbi, or it can be rendered by laymen, by such men as Jacob Riis, by many a man and woman whom I could name, who, with infinite self-devotion, with love for mankind, but with a wisdom which prevents this love from becoming hysterical or sentimental, work steadily for the uplifting of their kind.

Let the challenge be accepted. The work to be done is not easy. No work worth doing ever is easy. The fight for righteousness, the effort to realize the Kingdom of God in this world, is fraught with infinite hardship and risk, with the certainty of wearisome labor and discouragement, with danger to all who are feeble and faint-hearted. It is because of this very fact that the best, the most resolute, and the most daring spirits, should listen to the summons which calls them to the life of effort and conflict. We ask that men of heroic temper undertake the great adventure. We ask it for the very reason that the work thus undertaken necessitates the sacrifice of self-interest. Heroic deeds are to be done in this struggle, and we ask for heroic men to come forward to do them. The trumpet call is the most inspiriting of all sounds, because it summons men to spurn ease and self-indulgence and timidity, and bids them forth to the field where they must dare and do and die at need. So now the call of duty to undertake this great spiritual adventure, this work for the betterment of mankind, should ring in the ears of young men who are high of heart and gallant of soul, as a challenge to turn to the hard life of labor and risk which is so infinitely well worth living.

A Growing Church Is a Missionary Church. "How would you portray a dying church?" an artist was once asked. "Would you picture a small, scattered congregation worshiping in a building that was evidently falling to pieces?" "Not so," the artist replied, and then he outlined his sketch. The canvas should show a magnificent edifice, with a great organ, richly carved pulpit, and beautiful windows. The striking objects within should be two—a large collection plate in the

hands of a church official and on the wall a small box marked "Collection for Foreign Missions" and over its opening a huge cobweb.

"In the interest of the Kingdom of Christ, greater than the need of securing contributions is the need of securing contributors," is a striking remark of Dr. John R. Mott. "Right practices in giving emancipate one from selfishness and make possible the larger manifestation of the power of Christ in one's life, and develops world-conquering power. It might be possible to double the amount given by a church without increasing its spirituality and power; but it would be impossible to multiply the number of members who give in the right spirit without immensely augmenting that church's spiritual life and achieving ability."

For Discussion. 1. What can be done by a Committee of One when that one is a Barnabas? Spurgeon declared that "The best committee is a committee of three with two of them sick abed."

2. Men who discover talent in others. How leaders are found and trained.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What part had prayer in Peter's escape? 2. What shows that the disciples had not expected their prayer to be answered? 3. Since our Golden Text is true, why was not James delivered from death? 4. Why do we need to pray? 5. For what may we pray? 6. For what should we pray? 7. What can prayer accomplish?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
LESSONS FROM THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH

Beginning the Lesson. Ben Hur, by Lew Wallace, is an interesting story which you will greatly enjoy reading, if you have not already done so. You can never forget that scene in the Hippodrome where the Jew in the contest with the Roman guides his four fleet Arab steeds through the mazes of the chariot race. It is the hippodrome at Antioch, Syria, which the author depicts, and he gives many interesting glimpses of the streets and fine buildings of that ancient city.

Coin of Tarsus

Where is Antioch? Who first came there and told the Gentiles as well as the Jews about Jesus the Christ? What had caused them to leave Jerusalem? What was the result of their message? Who had been their Helper? When report of what they had done reached Jerusalem, how do you think those Jewish leaders there felt about it? What did they do? Why did they select Barnabas? What do we already know about him? When he reached Antioch, what did he find? How did he feel about it?

Barnabas decided to stay awhile in Antioch and help on the work which so evidently had God's blessing. But people were so eager to hear the good news that he could not teach them all, and he decided to go after Paul and induce him to come back with him to the work. He knew that Paul would be just the right man for the place. In Tarsus he found Paul, who gave ready assent to his request.

Barnabas and Paul Come to Antioch. We cannot tell by which route they went, for they could go by sea or by land. If they took ship in the harbor, they would be rowed down on the stream. Bearing southeast, when they reached the open sea, the coasting vessel would scud across the gulf, heading for the Syrian coast. All day she would sail, and by the time the purple sunset was lighting the tapering cone of Mount Cassius till it glowed like a torch, they would run in between the towers of the Seleucia breakwaters into the outer port, and thence to the inner basin of the harbor.

In the morning the two comrades would be out by dawn from the harbor-city of Seleucia to start their tramp of sixteen miles up the road that led from the port to the metropolis—Antioch. On the right of this road was the River Orontes curving like a serpent along the plain.

If they went from Tarsus by land they would trudge by the great road round the head of the gulf, the road by which Alexander the Great and Xenophon had both passed with their armies.

The muleteers and camel-drivers would find themselves outstripped by these two traveling Jews, who would stride along with cloaks over shoulders and robes girt under their leather belts, in order to give their legs freedom for walking.

Saul's face would glow and his eyes gleam with sheer happiness. He was on his way to one of the three greatest cities of the world, tramping by the side of his friend Barnabas, in the service of him for whom he gloried to live. And this was only to be a beginning of adventures. No wonder Saul rejoiced.

Ruins of "St. Paul's Gateway," Antioch

As they walked on, Barnabas would tell Saul that it was not to be all plain sailing for them in their work at Antioch.

"These Greeks," he would say, "have the Spirit in them. They walk in the Way. But the strict Jews among the Brethren (especially down at Jerusalem) say that these newcomers must become Jews before they can really join us. I say 'No.' What do you think?"

It does not seem to us at first sight very exciting to know whether Saul said "Yes," or "No." Yet, if he had disagreed with Barnabas, the whole history of the world might have been different, and our own land (and therefore we, ourselves) might never have heard of Jesus. For the followers of Jesus—if Saul had sided with the stricter Jew-Nazarenes—might well have become a narrow little Jewish clique.

What was Saul's answer? From the words that he wrote later we know he would say, "The Good News about Jesus is the saving power both to the Jew and the Greek."

In such talk about the great work in front of them, Barnabas and his younger colleague Saul would at last come out in sight of the walls of Antioch. Passing by lovely groves of myrtle and other trees, the road curved southward just where it came out on the bridge whose four round arches spanned the greatest stream in all Syria—the Orontes River.

Passing through the gateway in the city wall, the travelers came at once on all the hum and bustle of Antioch. In the center of the city they walked into the most wonderful street in the world of that day. For four miles it stretched east and west, a shining colonnade of white marble. It had been built by Herod. Roman ladies in swinging palanquins borne by slaves, shielded by dainty curtains from the sun and from the dust of the streets; and droves of mules bearing figs from Cyprus, splendid carvings from Greece, books from the learned cities of North Africa, or purple cloth from the world-famed dyers of Tyre, met caravans of dromedaries tired from their long march over the sands from beyond the Euphrates and grunting under their loads of Persian silks and of dates.

As Saul passed along the street he saw a boy with a flask of oil and a measure of wheat going toward a little temple, making his offering to the idol Apollo. And he would hardly know how to restrain himself. There was the statue of Apollo, whom the Antiochenes specially worshiped, exquisitely graceful, "icily faultless, splendidly null"; a god whose story was interesting, but could help no boy to keep his life clean. Saul wanted to tell that boy of his own living Hero, strong and resolute, who alone could lead that boy into the full stature of manhood.

As he looked over the sea of faces, Saul would see that, with all their differences of color of skin, of language and country, these people all had a great dumb need—groping after God if haply they might find him.

Saul knew by this time that the Good News of Jesus Christ was not for his own people, the Jews, alone. There in Antioch was young Titus, the Greek, and many others who worshiped Christ. Indeed, the people of Antioch began to see that these strange new people had only one common bond—they were not of one race, or class; but they all worshiped a new God—an unseen Person who, they declared, dwelt in them, named Jesus Christ.

"They are Christians," said one man to another in the crowd, as they saw Saul and Barnabas pass along the street. So the Nazarenes were first called "Christians" in Antioch.—Condensed from Paul the Dauntless, by Basil Mathews.

The Names of the Followers of Jesus Christ. There are five names in the New Testament that are applied to the followers of Jesus Christ. They are meaningful names, names that indicate certain rich aspects of the Christian life.

The first of these names is that of *disciples*. It is a familiar term, especially in the Gospels. It was the first name applied to the followers of Christ. The Twelve whom he called to be with him and whom he trained to carry on his work after he had left the earth, were known as his disciples before they became his apostles.

"Disciple" means "learner." It implies teaching, it suggests a school, and Jesus was primarily a Teacher. In the final instructions Jesus gave his missionaries they were to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all things he had commanded them. The ideal follower of Christ is ever a learner. "Learn of me," says Jesus to all who would come after him.

The second of the names is *believers*. This is a still more intimate term than *disciple*. It suggests closer relationship. It means more than intellectual acceptance of the truth of the historic Christ. It has in it the idea of trust. We believe a truth; we trust a person. This name of *Believers* for the followers of Christ has in it the idea of trust, a personal trust in a personal Savior.

The third name is *Brethren*. This is more intimate even than *Believer*. It has in it the idea of a very close family tie, the thought of brotherhood where love is regnant. Brotherhood! How the early Christians exemplified it! When Saul of Tarsus was converted and passed through the experience which blinded him so that he had to be led into Damascus, it was Ananias who was sent to bring him comfort and light. And when Ananias entered into the house where Saul was he put his hand on Saul and called him *"Brother* Saul." Again, when Paul was ready to begin his great work and the Christians were suspicious of him and so prejudiced that they were not disposed to allow him a hearing, it was another great-hearted brother, Barnabas by name, who brought Paul to the apostles, introduced him to the Jerusalem brethren, and recommended him as worthy of their confidence and support. What a brotherly act!

The fourth name applied by a New Testament writer to the followers of Christ is that of *Saints*. The name has been applied to the dead, and by the Catholic Church to certain of its distinguished dead who were accorded high church honors with imposing ceremonies. In the early days of Christianity every Christian was a saint. The word means "separated," and the idea is that those who accepted Christ by that very act separated themselves from the life that was hostile to purity and to spirituality. The common idea of a saint is that of some devout person far removed from the stress and storm of life's activities, who by withdrawal from the world has reached a high altitude of spiritual achievement. Nothing could be more foreign from the idea of a saint as used in the New Testament. The "saints" were men and women who had accepted the Christ and battled with sin and temptation in the hurly-burly of daily life. They were husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, shopkeepers and soldiers, servants and masters, scholars and peasants—all separated from the old life and following the new standard, the law of love as exemplified by their Savior. Therefore the name "saint" may be applied to all who seek to follow Christ.

The fifth and last name applied to Christ's followers in the New Testament is the crowning name, *Christians*. Its meaning is obvious. It means "Christ's ones." If it was bestowed as a stigma at Antioch it was certainly accepted as a distinction. It is the most natural name for the followers of Christ.

What is your name? Is it Disciple? Believer? Brother? Saint? Is it Christian? Is your way of life entitled to this name?—Condensed from Ornamented Orthodoxy, by Dr. Edgar DeWitt Jones.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Be a young Barnabas in your school, on your playground; always have kind words ready; have the spirit of encouragement in your heart and it will get onto your lips.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

A Christian is one who believes something about Christ, in whom Christ has done something; and who is doing something for Christ.—Dr. McClennan.

It is a great blessing given by God to be in a position to do good to others.—Cyprian.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What relation was this Herod to Herod the Great who wished to kill the Infant Jesus? 2. What was Herod's motive in killing James and imprisoning Peter? 3. What do you find to admire in Peter in the events of this lesson? 4. What do you think the prayer of the church had to do with Peter's release? 5. Does God always answer prayer in the way the supplicant wishes? 6. Of what use is it to pray?

LESSON XII—JUNE 21

PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON

**GOLDEN TEXT: The angel of the Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him,
And delivereth them. Psalm 34.7**

LESSON Acts 12.1-24 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 91.1-12

ACTS 12.5 Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him. 6 And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards before the door kept the prison. 7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9 And he went out, and followed; and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision. 10 And when they were past the first and the second guard, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him. 11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. 12 And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying. 13 And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to answer, named Rhoda. 14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Peter stood before the gate. 15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was even so. And they said, It is his angel. 16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed. 17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went to another place.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. JAMES IS KILLED AND PETER IS IMPRISONED, verses 1-4. Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great, was now king of Palestine, and he began at this time to persecute the leaders of the church at Jerusalem. He had James, the brother of John, beheaded, and this deed pleased the Jews. It was "the days of unleavened bread," as the Passover was called, because no leaven, or yeast, was allowed in Jewish homes while the festival lasted. It was a time when the Jews were especially hostile to those who differed from them, and Herod, as Josephus says of him, "rejoiced in living in good reputation." He sought to still further enhance his reputation by having Peter imprisoned to await his execution at the close of the Passover. Executions were not carried out during the Passover, as the festival must not be polluted by the shedding of blood, and Herod was nominally a Jew (his grandmother, Mariamne, was a Jewess) and most scrupulous as to all Jewish observances.

"When Herod saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. When a man finds that a certain course of conduct is receiving popular applause he is led on to further excesses. A public speaker descends to a coarse and vulgar jest, and because it pleases the baser sort in the audience, and the speaker is awarded a round of applause, he is prone to descend to still farther depths of degradation" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

Peter was guarded by four quaternions of soldiers, that is, there were four sets of men, one set for each watch; and four men in each set, two of whom were chained to Peter in his cell, and two on guard outside.

It was the Roman custom to fasten a chain from the right wrist of a prisoner to the left wrist of a soldier. When extraordinary precautions were taken, the prisoner was chained to two soldiers, one on each side. Matthew Henry tells us that tradition "makes a mighty rout about these chains," and claims that one of the soldiers kept them as a sacred relic, that they were long afterwards presented to Eudoxia the Empress, and that many miracles were wrought by them. One of the Roman Catholic feast days (the first of August) is called *Festum Vinculorum Petri,* The Feast of Peter's Chains.

II. THE DELIVERANCE OF PETER, verses 5-11. First of all in the record of Peter's escape, we are told that the church was earnestly praying for Peter.

Peter was kept in prison, *but* earnest prayer was made for him. Notice the force of that little word *But*.

"No kindnesses shown in act are so important or so essential a part of friendship, as prayer for our friend" (Dr. J. R. Miller).

It was the night before his trial and execution as planned by Herod, that help came.

"God's time to help is when things are brought to their last extremity" (Matthew Henry).

Peter was not troubled. He was calmly sleeping when help came. The circumstances of his escape are minutely told, the coming of the angel—God's messenger—the light in the cell, the awakening of Peter, the brief words to make haste, the falling off of the chains, the girding and the putting on of sandals and outer cloak, the command to follow, the passing of the first and the second guard, the opening of the iron outer gate of the prison leading into the city, the going out and passing through one street, and then the being left alone.

All this time Peter was dazed and did not know whether he were waking or dreaming, until he "came to himself" at the opening of the iron gate; then he said, "Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews."

"God hath a thousand keys to open a thousand doors for the deliverance of his own when it has come to the great extremity. Let us be faithful and care for our own part, which is to do and suffer for him, and lay God's part on him, and leave it there; duties are ours; events are the Lord's. When our faith goeth to meddle with events, and to hold a court (if I may so speak) upon God's providence, and beginneth to say, 'How wilt thou do this or that?' we lose ground; we have nothing to do there, it is our part to let the Almighty exercise his own office and steer his own helm" (Mark Rutherford).

"Yet this one thing I learn to know
Each day more surely as I go,
That doors are opened, ways are made,
Burdens are lifted or are laid,
By some great law unseen and still" (Helen Hunt Jackson).

III. THE DOUBT AND DELIGHT OF THE DISCIPLES, verses 12-17. After some deliberation, Peter went to the house of Mary, the mother of the John Mark (afterwards the Evangelist), where many disciples were gathered to pray for him. He knocked at the courtyard, and a maid named Rhoda answered the summons. She recognized Peter's voice, and in her joy left him there while she ran to tell the good news. "Thou art mad," they said at first. "It is his angel," they next decided.

"How suggestive an incident! They were praying for an answer; the answer comes to the door; and it strikes them as incredible. Now, God's answers to our prayers ought not to surprise us into incredulity. Why should we suppose the herald to be mad? God is good! God is faithful! The answer often comes knocking at the door but we don't let it in, and we never know that the answer has been given. We are in an unexpectant mood, and we have never suspected the wealth which the Lord would have left at our gate" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

Implore his aid, in his decisions rest,
Secure, whate'er he gives, he gives the best (Samuel Johnson).

At last Peter's knocking was rewarded and he was admitted. Beckoning to the disciples to keep silent, he told them how his escape had come about, and bade them tell James and the brethren, thus recognizing James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1.19) as the head of the church. For James's position of leadership, see Gal. 2.9; Acts 15.13; 21.18.

Peter sought a place of safety outside of Jerusalem. "It seems strange to us that with their charge to evangelize the world, the Twelve had stayed so long in Jerusalem. But they had to fix the outlines of the teaching and of the oral tradition which is the basis of the Gospels, and also to determine the elementary principles of Church order and worship. To do this required common agreement and consent, which could only be secured by continuous fellowship and residence at the center of affairs. Now, however, sufficient time had elapsed, and when Peter left the city, James, the Lord's brother, was already in the position of president—and to use the later term, bishop—of the church at Jerusalem" (Rackham).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What incident first brought Peter into collision with the authorities? What did the latter content themselves with doing on that occasion? Why? When and why was Peter again imprisoned? How was he punished? Why was he freed?

HEROD AGRIPPA I, PERSECUTOR OF THE CHURCH. The first persecutors of the disciples were the Sadducees and chief priests (Acts 4.1; 5.17); the next, the Pharisees with Saul as their leader. A new persecutor then arose through the civil authority, in the person of Herod Agrippa I.

Herod I, or Herod the Great, as he is better known, died soon after the birth of Jesus, and his kingdom was divided among his three sons. Herod Antipas, the son to whom Galilee and Perea were given, was the Herod who put John the Baptist to death. Aristobulus was another son whom Herod the Great had accused of plotting against him, and who was strangled by order of the court at his father's wish. The son of Aristobulus, the grandson of Herod the Great, is known in history as Herod Agrippa I. Josephus calls him "Agrippa the Great."

Between the years 41 and 44 A. D. Herod Agrippa I ruled all Palestine as had his grandfather, Herod the Great. (The Herod Agrippa before whom Paul made his plea, Acts 26, was the son of this man.)

His ambition went still farther, he wished to become an independent king, and he needed the favor of the Jews. Because he had prevented Caligula from carrying out his purpose of having his statue placed in the temple, he was already popular with his subjects, despite his introduction of Roman customs. He would court their favor further by persecuting this new sect which the Jewish leaders so hated, and he began with the most prominent apostles, knowing that this would arouse "the expectation of the Jews."

The Death of Herod. Herod had the matter of Peter's escape from prison investigated and ordered the guards put to death. He returned to Cæsarea and soon afterwards a deputation of men from Tyre and Sidon came to see him. Herod addressed them from the throne, and they, wishing to gain his favor, for he had been displeased with them, shouted, "The voice of a god, and not of a man." In the midst of such adulation, which he craved, he was stricken with a terrible disease and died.

Herod's death in 44 A. D. establishes the date of this lesson as the Passover week of that year.

The Close of "The Acts of Peter." With this lesson we end our study of the life of Peter. Jerusalem has been the headquarters of the Christian Church until now, and Peter has been the leading spirit among the apostles. The center now changes from Jerusalem to Antioch in Syria, and the leadership, as far as we know from The Acts, to Paul. Peter lived twenty years longer, but we have only incidental allusions to this last part of his life.

The Place. The scene of the lesson is Jerusalem. The location of the prison is not known, though many claim that it was the Tower of Antonia. Note that Mark's house seems to have become the place of meeting for the Christians in Jerusalem.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for Peter. And Peter was saved. Equally earnest prayer must have been offered for James. And Herod killed James with the sword. These facts are a challenge to you—to get your pupils' thoughts about the nature of prayer and its answer, and if they are cherishing wrong thoughts, to set them right.

A Sunday-school teacher in a poor district in England spoke about the beautiful weather one Sunday. "Yes," said a little girl, "I know why it is fine today; I asked God last night to let us have a lovely day." "But what if it had rained instead?" asked the teacher. "I should have said that God was thinking about the flowers," the girl answered. That little girl had been well taught.

Why should one pray? What benefits come from prayer? Should prayer consist wholly of petitions? Should prayer be wholly for self? In what spirit should one pray? Is prayer always answered? Is "No" an answer to prayer? Ask your pupils these and other questions about prayer.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE POSSIBILITIES OF PRAYER

Beginning the Lesson. Herod Agrippa on the throne, Peter in prison—which is the stronger man? Herod is the typical persecutor; Peter, the typical leader of the church. Herod is the favorite of Rome and the popular idol of the Jewish people; Peter is alone, helpless, securely guarded by soldiers and chains in an inner prison. Herod has all the resources of the great Roman Empire back of him; Peter has back of him the prayers of a faithful company of followers of Jesus Christ. Which one is defeated? Why? To quote a line of Tennyson's, Peter's friends are

Battering at the gates of heaven with stones of prayer,

and their prayer prevails; Peter is freed. How?

The Angel is with Us more often than We Think. As long as Peter had an iron gate before him, he had an angel beside him. It was not until the iron gate had been safely negotiated that forthwith the angel departed from him. A devout Jew, in bidding you farewell, will always use a plural pronoun. And if you ask for whom, besides yourself, his blessing is intended, he will reply that it is for you and for "the angel over your shoulder." We are too fond of fancying that the angel is only with us when the chains are miraculously falling from off our feet, and when the doors are miraculously opening before our faces. We are too slow to believe that the angel is still by our side when we emerge into the night and come to the iron gate.

A Prisoner Chained to Two Soldiers

As long as Peter had an iron gate before him, he had an angel beside him. The converse, however, is equally true. As long as Peter had an angel beside him, he had an iron gate ahead of him. Angels do not walk by our sides for fun. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" If there is an angel by my side, depend upon it, there is work in front of me that only an angel can do. The voice of the angel, the falling of fetters, and the opening of doors are all designed to brace us for the dark night and the iron gate.

"The iron gate opened to them of its own accord." It did look like it. During my twelve years at Mosgiel I often went through the great woolen factory. The machines were marvelous—simply marvelous. As you watched the needles slip in and out, or stood beside the loom and saw the pattern grow, it really looked as though the things were bewitched. They seemed to be doing it all "of their own accord." But one day the manager said, "Would you care to see the power house?" And he took me away from the busy looms to another building altogether, and there I saw the huge engines that drove everything. Neither looms nor needles really work "of their own accord." Nor do iron gates. A few minutes after the gate had opened, and the angel had vanished, Peter came to the house of Mary, the mother of Mark, where many were gathered together praying. And then Peter understood by what power the iron gate had opened, just as I understood, when I saw the engine-room, how the great looms worked. When angels visit prisons, and iron gates swing open of their own accord, there must be a driving-force at work somewhere.—Condensed from Faces in the Fire, by F. W. Boreham.

Peter's Release Wrought by Prayer. In such an emergency as this does not a prayer-meeting appear absurd? Here is a man in prison, surrounded by a strong defense. The material obstacles are overwhelming. What is the use of a prayer-meeting? Can we pray a man out of his chains, and through the prison gate, and through the assembled soldiery? The world regards it as a grotesque expedient. And perhaps there are many Christians who would regard it as legitimate and reasonable to pray for the quietness of Peter's spirit, that he might be kept in boldness of faith and in open communication with his Lord, but who would regard a prayer for his release as trespassing upon forbidden ground. Does not this timidity very frequently spoil the range of our petitions, and rob us of the promised inheritance? If the dominion of prayer is to be limited by the prison gates, we are reduced to a pitiful impoverishment.

I see no need of giving our supplications the severe restrictions which many Christians impose. I would rather exercise a glorious liberty, and if Peter is in prison I would pray for the opening of the prison doors, and for the apostle's bodily release. "And behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him." That was a great moving mission begotten by the ministry of prayer. I will not at the bidding of unbelief reduce the narrative to mere poetry and regard the incident as a commonplace event for which, if we knew everything, we could find a commonplace explanation. It is one of the profoundest beliefs in my own life that there was a vital connection between that prayer-meeting and the prison.—Condensed from The Silver Lining, by Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Does Prayer always Bring the Help Asked for? Don't you think that the church prayed that the life of James might be spared? Why was not their prayer answered in some miraculous way? Were not prayers offered for the lives of most of our boys who fell in France? Were they not sincere prayers? Were they not right prayers? Why were not the lives of these brave soldiers spared?

In a single sentence the apostle John gives the condition which must be fulfilled if our prayers are to prevail with God. "This is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." The church did not know that it was the will of God that Peter should not at this time, like Stephen and James, suffer a martyr's death, but they prayed earnestly, nevertheless, that Peter's life might be spared. They must have prayed submissively, asking only that their prayers be granted if it were God's will. What did Jesus mean when he said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened?" He did not mean that we have a claim on God which he is bound to acknowledge if we ask it. He meant that whatever we ask in the name and in the spirit of Jesus himself, whatever, therefore, is in accordance with the divine will, will be granted us. Our prayer will be answered in our way, if it is the right way; but if it is not, then in God's own way. As Whittier beautifully says:

All as God wills, who wisely heeds
To give or to withhold,
And knoweth more of all my needs
Than all my prayers have told!

Can Prayer Count in a World of Law? The more we know of the laws of God's world, the freer we are to accomplish our purposes, not in spite of these laws but through and by means of them. To illustrate. An ocean liner with hundreds of lives on board is in imminent peril in mid-Atlantic—rendered helpless and out of control by the angry storm. Once that liner must have been left to its own helplessness, or to the limited resources of its own provision. But through the discovery in recent days of more of the system of nature's laws, the mind of man has learned to manipulate natural forces in a new way. So that now appeal for help can be sent out by wireless across the distances, in answer to which appeal great ships change their courses and hurry to the place of danger. Each new law of nature becomes thus, when discovered, a new instrument of personality, an instrument for the development in new ways of helpful intercourse between persons, and, as such, a new possibility for man's causing things to happen in a world of law which apart from his action or intervention never would have happened.

Now if man is thus able and more than able with his advancing knowledge of nature's laws, to coördinate and utilize these laws for ends of personal worth and value, what shall we say of God who knows all the laws of nature and in whose hand-leash are all the laws of the world for the realization of ends of moral and spiritual worth with his children? Who would be so rash as to attempt to set bounds to the possibilities of the working of him who in his activity in the world is limited, not by any obstacles or hindrances outside of himself as man is, but only by such conditions as proceed from his own character as wise and holy Love, and whom, therefore, we call our Almighty Heavenly Father. To his children's prayers he may respond through the coördination of the ordinary laws of nature which are the basal form of the working of his Fatherly goodness and power; or over and beyond those laws he may exercise his Fatherly Providence in accordance with other laws which are to us as yet unknown and which, therefore, we call miraculous. We can set no limits to the sphere of God's working in answer to prayer.—J. M. Shaw, in The Reformed Church Review.

What Prayer Does. One answer is that the supreme outcome of prayer is to change the world. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, as St. James declared. Prayer works miracles; and the man who prays sees them being performed by the finger of God.

Another answer, compelling enthusiastic approval, is that the supreme result of prayer is the wonderful difference prayer makes in the lives—the characters—of those who pray. Whether prayer changes events or not, of one thing even the so-called practical folk are sure: it has made beautiful souls out of those who lift their hands in supplication. What would St. Paul have been if he had not prayed? And who can imagine a St. Francis without prayer? The modern saints, too, have been what they were because they prayed—men of action like John Bright and "Chinese" Gordon, men of thought and emotion like Tennyson and Browning, men of science like Asa Gray and Louis Pasteur.

Another answer is that man finds in prayer his confidence and peace. We may not be aware perhaps that prayers have changed his character: he may think that its results are only such as he alone can see. He will tell how he was fretted by every outward circumstance in the day, how he worried over the possible calamities of the morrow, how he lay awake at night chasing phantoms across the darkness, how he dreaded both annihilation and eternity, how he vexed his soul with all the doubts and speculations of human thought—and now he prays, he talks with the unseen God, and he is at peace.

The result of prayer which I am convinced includes and explains all other results is this: Prayer receives God. The Life, the Strength enters through prayer. God is in us always, because he is all-pervading; but there is, by his will, within the life of each one of us a secret inner shrine, a holy of holies, which is especially and essentially the personality of each one of us, which is the man himself—from this God will allow himself to be excluded; or he will joyfully enter and possess the personality, if he is asked. And the asking is the most earnest and honest prayer.

Verily, prayer is more than words, more than concentration of thought; it is action, deeds, life. It is undoubtedly hard always to act in accordance with one's prayers. Here men fail again and again to offer a complete prayer. Unless there be this sincerity of life within the praying, the prayer falls apart and fades into vapor. The man who prays to be honest and does not strangle the first temptation to cheat, is only playing at prayer. The man who prays to be generous, and does not straightway untie his purse-strings for some adequate cause, is a hypocrite. Prayers must be done as well as thought and uttered.

The highest good to which prayers can bring us is the conscious possession of God. To possess God consciously solves all problems. If we have him in our minds and hearts we are not concerned whether we get the things we have asked for: we know that he is with us and in us, and his strength will be sufficient for us under every emergency. When we have the Gift what can we care about gifts?

If prayer can accomplish this, who would not give himself to the great experiment? It will not suffice to make a little space of quiet now and then; it will not suffice to say a form of beautiful words; it will not suffice to stand or kneel in sacred places. All these beginnings of prayer will help. But prayer means the uttermost of man's strength. It is an absolutely thorough-going experiment, this praying. Have you prayed with all your life and love? Then you have found God. In him you have courage; in him you have insight; in him you have joy for yourselves and for all you love; in him you have eternal life.—Condensed from a chapter in Why Men Pray, by Dr. Charles Lewis Slattery.

For Discussion. 1. The art of prayer. "To pray with the heart and the understanding," said Coleridge, "to believe that God hears prayer and yet wisely doeth what pleaseth him, this surely is the highest exercise of the faculties of the human spirit." See Quiet Talks on Prayer, by S. D. Gordon; The Meaning of Prayer, by Dr. Fosdick.

2. Rulers or men in any position of authority, to whom, like Herod, people are but pawns in the game being played for their own profit.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
HOW PETER WAS BROUGHT OUT OF PRISON

Beginning the Lesson. There were some remarkable escapes of prisoners during the Great War. An Iowa Lieutenant had several such escapes. Taken on board a submarine as a prisoner, he was carried to Wilhelmshaven and kept for a while

on a ship there, with a sentry outside his barred window and another outside his barred door. Then when he was being taken on a train across Germany between two guards, he waited till one of them dozed off and the other was not looking and dived through the window, and although the train was going forty miles an hour, he was not killed.

Here in our lesson today we have a story of prison-breaking, and Peter is the hero of it. Imagine Peter in prison! A man who had always lived in the open, he must have felt it keenly. But he was not kept there long. The prison could not hold Peter because God had work for him to do outside. He was soon delivered, and Luke tells us how it was done. How was it? (See Text Explained.)

Herod, Peter, Peter's Friends, and God. When the story opens, the meshes of Herod's net are drawn very closely around his intended prey. Peter lies on the floor of his cell, chained to the arm of a soldier on either side. Outside the bolted door may be heard the heavy breathing of a third; a little further along the corridor a fourth sentinel is posted. And the prisoner's fatal hour is drawing terribly near. It is the last night of Peter's captivity; it is the last watch of the night; by six o'clock of that April morning he is to be led forth to execution, to be, like his Master, first the butt and then the victim of the Jewish mob. That is what Herod is meditating on his bed in the palace; that is, so to say, the first act of the drama.

But in another quarter of Jerusalem another act is simultaneously going forward. The prisoner has friends, faithful and also influential, who are aware of the imminent peril in which he is placed. They are begging Peter's life, not from the arrogant tyrant, no, but from him who is higher than the highest; and they have been employed thus all night long. All this is going on at the same moment of time. Herod is purposing the Apostle's death; has arranged it; has given the order and set the machinery in motion for its accomplishment. Peter's friends are clinging to the skirts of Omnipotence on his behalf; but the guards are at their post, the prison-doors are fast, and the hour is hastening on.

And what is he doing around whom all this plot is thickening? He is quietly asleep. Herod cannot sleep that night. He is rehearsing on his bed the words in which he will harangue the populace around the scaffold in the morning, and is gloating in anticipation over the plaudits that will salute his ears. And the apostle's friends cannot sleep; they are held before God in an agony of supplication. But the man whose life is in the balance sleeps, with the sleep of blissful ignorance, of conscious innocence, of happy tranquillity.

"Hapless mortal," might not one say? "So defenseless, so passive, how thou art made the prey of circumstances! They are marching down upon thee; they are stalking thee, as the hunter his quarry. And thou dost not note their approach; thou dost not hear their stealthy tread; their shadow does not fall upon thy vision. Thy very life is hanging on a hair—and thou sleepest!"

Might not one speak thus? Yes, if there were not one more Person in the drama, he who is in the background of every drama. There is the enemy plotting, the friends praying; and the man himself around whom all the menace and the intercession are gathering has shut his eyes and quieted himself to slumber. Because there, too, is he who, because he slumbereth not nor sleepeth, giveth his beloved sleep. God is there in the palace; there in the house of prayer; there in the prison, keeping all the threads of the drama in his own hands; holding the tyrant's power in derision, hearing the prayer that ascends to his holy habitation, responding to the trust of his child, whom he is lulling to sleep on his bosom. And now it is his time to wake. The final act is ready to be launched upon the stage. The moment of deliverance is appointed, and already its messenger and instrument is on the wing to loose him that is appointed unto death. How well may Peter sleep when God is watching over his bed and preparing his awaking!—Dr. Robert Law, in The Grand Adventure.

How Prayer Helped British Soldiers. A company of British soldiers were holding a Belgian village against a superior force of Germans, when four men became separated from the main force. Seeing the door of a house open they rushed in, hoping to gain the roof and eventually escape. But they found there was no ladder by which to reach the skylight. Certain death would be their fate if they left the house. So they remained in an upper room to await the coming of the Germans.

It was Sunday, and the corporal suggested that they hold a little service. After singing and reading from his khaki Testament, he said to his comrades, "Men, you know I am not fit for this job, but let us pray." As he prayed, heavy footsteps were heard coming up the stairs. The door was flung open. The corporal kept on

praying as the German officer clicked his heels as he came to "Attention." Evidently moved by the sight, the officer quietly crept down stairs and closed the door. The men were not again molested. When darkness came they were able to make their escape and rejoin their army.

Prevailing Prayer. In 1836-'37 the two missionaries, the Murrays, had gone to Tutuela in the South Seas. They had worked with some success; there were several little churches established through the island and all was favorable and promising, but all at once, on one given night, throughout the island in each place where there was a church, an extraordinary spiritual movement began; the people came in asking for baptism, in the assemblies they rose up confessing their sins; there was a great cry for God in these churches—the people were gathered into the church and the work lasted and is lasting still. These two missionaries were almost afraid; they thought it was some unwholesome disturbance at first. They could not account for it at all, but they saw it was God, and they gathered in the fruit.

It was many months after that the news came from the old country, from Scotland, that in Jedburgh, the town from which these two had come, on that very day a spiritual movement had come and the people had met together and were praying for Tutuela and the missionaries; and the prayers that ascended there in Jedburgh for the coming of the kingdom of God descended on Tutuela at the other side of the world. There could be no doubt about it that the intercession had prevailed.—Dr. R. F. Horton.

Prayer and Work. In Mr. Pearson's biography of John Albion Andrew, Massachusetts "War Governor," we are told about his abiding faith in prayer. In the summer before the Emancipation Proclamation, he pleaded with a friend to go to Washington and urge upon Lincoln the advisability of making it at once. The friend demurred, but finally consented to go. No sooner had the friend given his promise to go, than Andrew turned suddenly upon him and said, "You believe in prayer, don't you?" "Why, of course!" was the surprised response. "Then let us pray," said the Governor. "And he knelt right down"—to quote the friend's words—"at the chair that was placed there. We both kneeled down, and I never heard such a prayer in all my life. I never was so near the throne of God, except when my mother died, as I was then."

Mr. Kingsley, the friend, told Lincoln about Governor Andrew's prayer, and the latter said: "When we have the Governor of Massachusetts to send us troops in the way he has, and when we have him to make such prayers for us, I have no doubt that we shall succeed."

God Helps Those who Try to Help Themselves. One thing we must remember when we pray. God helps those who try to help themselves. If we do not help ourselves, we ought not to expect God to help us.

There were two girls on their way to school one day. One of them always knew her lessons and the other one never did. The girl who never knew her lessons said to the other, "How do you learn your lessons so well?" She replied, "I pray to God and he always helps me with them." So the other girl thought that she would try that, too, but the next day she did not know any more than usual. She said she was not going to pray any more, that it did not do any good. The other girl said to her, "Did you study real hard after you had prayed?" "No," she said, "I didn't study. I thought if I prayed that was all there was to it."

God couldn't help her, because she did not help herself. God wants us to pray when we need help, and then do the very best that we can ourselves.—Dr. Stuart Nye Hutchison, in For The Children's Hour.

God's Answer to Prayer. Just because he is *a Father,* I can be sure he will listen sympathetically to my cry of need. Just because he is *a wise Father,* I can trust him to answer the cry in the wisest way. Just because he is *a perfect Father,* I can believe that he must have the best of reasons for sometimes refusing my requests.—Dr. G. H. Knight.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. God soon fades out of the life of any one who does not pray.—Mrs. Besant.

As the babbling child learns the art of speech by speaking, so prayer will teach us how to pray.—A. B. Simpson.

The most Christlike prayer is prayer for others.—Dr. Alexander MacColl.

God's goodness has been great to thee!
Let neither day nor night unhallow'd pass,
But still remember what the Lord hath done.—Shakespeare.

REVIEW—IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA

GOLDEN TEXT: Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1.8

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 98

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: HOW THE GOSPEL SPREAD

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: THE GROWTH OF THE EARLY CHURCH

Lesson I: The Early Church Startled into Existence. The last time that the disciples talked with Jesus, just before his ascension, he said unto them, "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The lessons of this Quarter have shown how these disciples bore their witness to him in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria.

The apostles, the leaders of the disciples, had had no thought of launching a new movement—the Early Church, as we call it. They had no organization, no program. They were terribly startled by the Lord's death and resurrection and ascension. at Jerusalem, as he had bade, they waited, spending the time in prayer. The Day of Pentecost came, and suddenly the cowardice of these men dissolved in courage, their hopelessness in confidence, their powerlessness in power.

On that great day, as Jesus Christ had promised, the Spirit came to the waiting group with wonderful dynamic force, thrilling their utmost being with a new energy and zeal. It was a time of great emotional excitement; they spoke in ecstatic words which conveyed their meaning to all who heard. So carried away with joy were they that outsiders who hastened to the scene even accused them of being drunk. Their wills and hearts were possessed and used by the Holy Spirit.

Then Peter addressed the people and his passionate utterance overmastered them. He spoke from his knowledge of Jewish prophecies and hopes and from his own personal knowldege of Jesus the Christ. "There are some chemical reactions which only come with heat. There are some intellectual reactions which only come with heat. Peter fairly burned his way into the minds of his hearers." He gripped not only their minds but their hearts and their wills when he cried, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified!"

"What shall we do?" the people cried. "Repent ye," was Peter's answer. Long before this Jesus had said to Peter and Andrew, "I will make you fishers of men." And shortly before this he had said to the Twelve, "Greater works than these shall ye do." Three thousand people made the great decision that day for Christ. And they all lived happily in Christian fellowship and prayer. Thus the Early Church was startled into existence.

The Spirit of God is always at work. God did not speak to Elijah in the hurricane but in the still, small voice. The Holy Spirit came to the apostles in a sound as of a rushing, mighty wind, but he comes today in the quieter moments of life, in the still voice of conscience.

Lesson II: The Early Church Increased in Numbers. The people who pray are the people who have sympathy for the afflicted. The people who worship are the people who give silver and gold and sympathy and help to those in need. The lame man who day after day was carried to the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg for alms knew this: he knew that from the worshipers, if from anyone, he would receive money. What he did not know was that one day he would receive a gift far better than money. Peter and John saw him one afternoon as they were entering the temple enclosure, and instead of the silver and gold which they had not, they gave him the great blessing of strength and vigor of limb, power to walk and leap and praise God for his wonderful cure.

"They gave," we say, but Peter himself immediately disclaimed any power in the matter. "Why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk?" they questioned the wondering people. It was faith in Jesus, the Prince of life, whom they had killed but God had raised from the dead, that had made the man strong and sound.

Like the listeners on the Day of Pentecost many of these people were pricked in their hearts by Peter's words, they believed and repented, and the little group of Christ's followers was augmented by five thousand more.

Our recent study of the Gospels has shown us how much of Christ's ministry was spent in alleviating human suffering and healing disease. He sent forth his disciples to do the same work, and in the Book of the Acts we see them carrying out this commission. And this is still the work of his followers today. It is safe to say that nine-tenths of all the charitable work of the world is being done by Christians.

Lesson III: Life in the Early Church. The new community of believers lived in such peace and harmony that it could be said of them that they were "of one heart and soul." With great power the apostles gave their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. In that community there were none that suffered, for its richer members parted with their possessions in order to care for the poor and needy. As the association was voluntary, so was the giving, but it always sufficed.

An example of great generosity was Barnabas, a Levite of Cyprus, who sold a field and brought all the money to the apostles to distribute as needed. An example of two who coveted the reputation for similar generosity and tried to gain it deceitfully were Ananias and Sapphira, who likewise sold a field but brought a part only of the sale price to the apostles, pretending that it was the whole. Peter saw through their hypocrisy and charged them with lying to the Holy Spirit. Speedy death befell each, and great fear came upon all.

Why has the name of Ananias and not that of Peter become synonymous with that of liar? Peter lied three times when he denied his Lord; Ananias lied but once. Some lies are baser than others. The motive and the manner of the lie of Ananias were baser than those of Peter. Peter's lie was prompted by a desire to shield himself. Ananias's lie was prompted by the love of praise. He wished to gain the good opinion of others, to establish a reputation for generosity, benevolence, self-sacrifice, but he would not pay the cost. He was a hypocrite, and the motive back of his hypocrisy is like that of the hypocrites whom Jesus condemned so scathingly. To Peter the temptation came suddenly and he yielded, and afterwards he repented bitterly. Ananias lied deliberately, he was thoroughly false at heart. Had his plan succeeded, had his deceit not been found out, instead of repenting he would have congratulated himself upon his success.

Deliver our souls, O Jehovah, from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue. Lying lips are an abomination to thee, but they that deal truly are thy delight.

Lesson IV: The First Martyr in the Early Church. There were two great branches of Jews in the Early Church: the native Hebrew-speaking Jews of Jerusalem, and the Greek-speaking Jews who had come to Jerusalem from distant places. The latter complained that their widows were not receiving as much help as the poor of the native-born Jews, and the apostles, upon whom the responsibility for the poor rested, proposed that a group of men be chosen to attend to the business side of the life of the church. Among the men chosen for this work was Stephen, a man who was remarkably endowed, seemingly equaling the apostles themselves in spiritual understanding and wisdom and power.

Stephen preached as well as distributed alms, and his preaching aroused the ire of the Pharisees. They charged him with having spoken against the temple and the law. He was a deep student of Old Testament Scriptures, a powerful reasoner, and his enemies were no match for him in argument. Intensely angered, they brought him for trial before the Sanhedrin and suborned false witnesses to accuse him of blasphemy.

The men who judged him beheld God's glory on his countenance as he made his defense. Calm and courageous of spirit, eloquent and invincible in his logic, he carried his hearers with him till he boldly turned accuser himself and charged them of resisting the Holy Spirit, and of breaking the law of which they were custodians, of crucifying Jesus the Christ.

The judges became a mob beside itself with fury. They rushed upon him, hurried him out of the city, and stoned him to death. Thus perished the first Christian martyr, but not before he had forgiven his murderers as had his Lord before him. So the first Christian blood was shed. Well done, good servant; thou hast been faithful unto death; receive the crown of life!

Lesson VI: Persecution Leads to Preaching in Samaria and also to a Gentile. A great persecution against the church in Jerusalem arose upon the death of Stephen, and they that were scattered abroad went about preaching the Word. Philip, one of the Seven appointed to assist the apostles, went to Samaria and the result of his preaching there was that multitudes gave heed. The apostles sent Peter and John to investigate the new departure of preaching to Samaritans; it met their

approval, and on their way back to Jerusalem they themselves preached the gospel in many Samaritan villagers.

A chasm was bridged when Philip preached to Samaritans, but a gulf was crossed when he proclaimed Christ to a Gentile. Under God's leading Philip left the prosperous work in Samaria and crossed the desolate hill country south of Judea till he came to the road that led to Gaza. Under God's leading he approached the chariot of an Ethiopian treasurer. On hearing the latter reading aloud from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading. "How can I, except some one shall guide me?" the great man returned, and gave Philip an invitation to ride with him in his chariot.

"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter: and as a lamb before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth," were the words of Isaiah from which Philip preached Jesus unto the Ethiopian, who believed and asked and received baptism, and then went on his way rejoicing.

Tradition has it that on returning to his own country he preached the truth which he had himself learned with much effect, and the Abyssinian people regard him as the founder of their church. In that case great results came from Philip's obedience to a call that must have been at first unwelcome, and from the Ethiopian's loyalty to his new-found Savior. Shall we, who are Christ's followers, shrink from obeying the inner impulse which is God's voice within, bidding us bear witness to Jesus the Christ?

Lesson VII: The Greatest Man in the New Testament History Joins the Early Church. Jesus Christ is the Startler of men. All through the ages lives have been instantly changed by suddenly coming into contact with him. The classical example of a man startled out of his old beliefs and habits of life into new belief and new life is that of Saul who is called Paul. "In the Divine reckoning," Sir William Ramsay makes Paul say, "my life begins from my conversion and call to the Gentiles. If you would understand my life, you must refer every act in it to that primary revelation of the will of God in me."

After the death of Stephen, Paul was the arch-persecutor of the disciples. Not content with persecuting those in Jerusalem, he secured letters of authority from the high priest to the synagogue in Damascus and started for that city, intending to seize men and women who believed in Jesus and bring them to Jerusalem for trial before the Sanhedrin.

As he was approaching Damascus, suddenly a dazzling light, brighter than the Syrian sun, shone round about him. He fell to the earth and heard a voice calling to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

"Who art thou, Lord?" he questioned.

And the solemn answer came, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; but rise and enter the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

Saul was blinded by the vision, and, proud Pharisee that he was, he was led by the hand like a little child. In Damascus he remained in darkness for three days.

Ananias, one of the disciples at Damascus, in a vision was directed to go to Paul and lay his hands upon him that he might receive his sight. Ananias hesitated—was Paul not come to Damascus to persecute the believers? But when told that Paul had been chosen by Christ to witness for him before the Gentiles, Ananias went at once.

"Brother Saul," were his words of greeting, as he laid his hands upon his one-time persecutor, "the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

At once Paul's sight was restored, and he arose and was baptized by one of the humble disciples whose death he had come to accomplish. Thus in a wonderful way the zealous persecutor of Jesus was suddenly changed into the equally zealous follower of his Lord.

Lesson VIII: Continued Growth of the Church throughout All Judea and Galilee and Samaria. It was difficult for Paul to live down his reputation both at Damascus and at Jerusalem. At once Paul preached in the synagogues and proclaimed that Jesus is the Christ, but the believers feared him and the other Jews planned to kill him. Paul made his escape, being let down over the walls in a basket.

Later he tried to join the disciples at Jerusalem, but they, too, feared him, and would not receive him until Barnabas told them what had happened to Paul on the way to Damascus and vouched for his sincerity as a follower of the Christ. Here again his life was in danger from the Jews, and by the brethren he was sent to Tarsus, his native city.

Then peace followed in all Judea, Galilee and Samaria, and the numbers in the church greatly multiplied.

Lesson IX: Miracles and their Effect upon the Growth of the Early Church. When Jesus was with the disciples he sent them forth to heal as well as preach, and now Luke tells us how Peter continued the work of healing at Lydda. He found a man named Æneas who had been bedridden for eight years, and telling him that Jesus Christ made him whole he bade him arise and roll up the mattress on which he had been lying. The palsied man obeyed, and those who saw him were led by the evidence of the power of Christ to turn to Christ.

Messengers came begging Peter to come to Joppa where a much-loved woman, named Dorcas, who had been devoted to good works, had died. Peter did not hesitate but went and restored her to life. So astounding a miracle as this led many to believe on the Lord.

Lesson X: A Large Number of Gentiles Admitted to the Early Church. Until now it had been taken for granted that a man must become a Jew before he could become a believer. He must enter the house of salvation through the narrow door of Judaism. The only exception had been the Ethiopian treasurer.

It was a vision which made Cornelius, the proud Roman, send for Peter, the humble Christian preacher, and it was another vision which made Peter, the exclusive Jew, go to the home of Cornelius, the dispised Gentile. Each was promptly obedient to his vision, although obedience called for action contrary to natural inclination.

Cornelius was a devout man, one that feared God and prayed to God always, and gave much alms to the Jews,—but he was a Gentile. At the home of Cornelius Peter found many of the kinsmen and friends of Cornelius, and to them all Peter proclaimed the Christ. While he was preaching the Holy Spirit fell on all, and Peter had them baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

When Peter returned to Jerusalem the other apostles upbraided him for entering into the house of Gentiles and eating with them. Peter justified his conduct by telling them of the two visions and of the coming of the Holy Spirit. "Who was I, that I could withstand God?" he questioned. "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" was the conclusion which his hearers were forced to draw.

Lesson XI: Members of the Early Church Called Christians First at Antioch. The history of the Early Church during its first one hundred years has been aptly called "A Tale of Three Cities"—Jerusalem, Antioch and Rome. Christianity, as we have seen, appeared first as a development of Judaism. Dr. Matheson compares its course to a road up to the summit of a hill; looking down from the summit one can see that the road whence he came is not the only way by which this spot might have been reached. At Antioch Christianity had reached the summit of the hill by the road which the Jews had supposed to be the only road, but there they discovered yet other roads leading to the same goal.

Unnamed believers in Christ of Cyprus and Cyrene, when "scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen," came to Antioch of Syria and preached there to the Greeks. The report that great numbers believed was brought to the church at Jerusalem, who sent Barnabas to investigate this unprecedented work of preaching to Gentiles. Barnabas came, approved and stayed to continue the work, first going to Tarsus for Paul who, he knew, was just the man for this broadening labor.

Here at Antioch, then, great numbers of Gentiles became believers, and a name was needed which should include both Jews and Gentiles, so "it came to pass," as Luke the historian says, "that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

Lesson XII: The Early Church Learns the Power of Prayer. A new persecutor of the church arose in the person of Herod, the king who at this time ruled all Palestine under the Romans. To gain the favor of the Jews he had James, the brother of John, put to death, and finding that this accomplished his purpose, he decided to please them further by taking Peter's life also. Because the Passover week had come, and he would not shed blood at that sacred time, he had Peter imprisoned, intending after the Passover was over to bring him forth for a spectacular execution. Very carefully was Peter guarded, day and night.

All this time the church was praying earnestly for Peter, and the result Luke tells us in so vivid a way that we seem to see Peter asleep in the peaceful assurance that the angel of the Lord encamped round about them that fear him; and then suddenly there is visible the glory of a heavenly visitant who awakens Peter, and as the chains fall from his hands bids him gird himself, put on his sandals, cast his

garment about him, and follow. We seem to see them pass by the guards, and as they approach the big iron door to see it swing open of its own accord to let them pass. We follow them as they walk through one street, and then, all danger of pursuit over, Peter is left alone. As the bewildered apostle "comes to himself," for he had thought that he was dreaming, he exclaims, "Now I know of a truth that the Lord hath sent his angel and delivered me."

Peter went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many of the disciples were praying for him. After gaining admission he told the amazed disciples how he had been freed.

God does answer prayer, but not always in the way we ask. "Our business is to pray, even if we do not get what we want. God's part is to answer in the way his love and wisdom dictates. We do not know whether we ought to be warm or cold, hungry or fed, sick or well, rich or poor, happy or miserable. God does. In these doubtful matters we can only suggest, and not dictate to the Almighty. To him belongs the decision. But as concerns the things that we know we ought to have because we are sure that they must be what he wishes us to have, our duty is to pray, and not only expect to get, but seek to get, what we ask for."

REVIEW QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

For Young People and Adults. 1. Who wrote The Acts and what was his purpose? 2. What is the relationship between the third Gospel and The Acts? 3. What persecutions befell the apostles? 4. How did the persecution of the church prove a blessing? 5. What two troubles arose within the church and how was each settled? 6. What saying of Stephen's reminds one of Christ? What deed of Peter's reminds one of Christ? 7. How has Peter shown his courage in these lessons? His trust? His teachableness? 8. How did Peter gain a wider outlook in regard to the mission of the gospel? How did Barnabas? 9. How did the gospel spread from Jerusalem, and what led to each important step? 10. What names have been given the disciples in these lessons, and what is the force of each?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. How were the disciples driven from Jerusalem; and what was the result? 2. Name four workers in the church at Jerusalem, and tell what each one did. 3. Who was the first Christian martyr, and why and how did he meet his death? 4. Who was the leader of the persecution that followed, and what changed him into a great worker for Christ? 5. Who preached the gospel to the Samaritans, who was sent to investigate the work, and what was his decision? 6. Who preached the gospel to Gentiles; where; who was sent to investigate the new departure; what was the result? 7. Tell some important fact about each of the following: Cæsarea, Dorcas, Antioch, Pentecost, Ananias, the Ethiopian Treasurer, Damascus. 8. Where had the gospel spread during the history of the first twelve chapters of The Acts? 9. Where did the disciples first receive the name of Christians? 10. Write a Sentence Sermon you have learned this Quarter and tell to what lesson it applied.

WRITTEN WORK TO BE BROUGHT TO CLASS

1. Imagine Pilate passing by when the excitement of Peter's preaching at Pentecost was at its height, and give the account as he might have told it to the Sanhedrin.
2. Contrast Peter the Disciple during the life of Christ, and Peter the Apostle in the Early Church.
3. Contrast the deaths of Ananias and Stephen.
4. Tell the story of the first Christian martyr.
5. Give a characterization of Barnabas.
6. The early life and education of Paul and his career as a persecutor of the Christians.
7. Paul's early ministry in Damascus, Jerusalem, Tarsus and Antioch in Syria.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults. 1. How did the Holy Spirit make known his will to the church at Antioch? 2. How does he still send forth foreign missionaries? 3. How rapidly is the whole world being evangelized?

For Intermediates and Seniors. What have been the chief events in Paul's life up to the time of going to Antioch? 2. Who were the first foreign missionaries, and how were they sent to the work? 3. What is your church doing for foreign missions?

ANTIOCH OF SYRIA

THIRD QUARTER

(Second Quarter of a Nine Months' Course)

LESSON I—JULY 5

THE BEGINNING OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

GOLDEN TEXT: **And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. Mark 16.15**

LESSON Acts 12.25 to 13.12 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55.1-7

ACTS 13 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Selecuia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant. 6 And when they had gone through the whole island unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus; 7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding. The same called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. 9 But Saul, who is also *called* Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him, 10 and said, O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE FIRST FOREIGN MISSIONARIES AND THEIR DISMISSAL SERVICE, verses 1-3. In the church at Antioch there were many prophets and teachers, chief among whom was Barnabas. There were also Symeon the Black, an African, no doubt; Lucius of Cyrene, perhaps one of the original evangelists who established the church at Antioch, Acts 11.20; Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch; and Saul, possibly the latest to join the leaders in Antioch. The Herod referred to here was Herod Antipas, whom Jesus described as a "fox," Lk. 13.32, son of Herod

the Great. According to Deissmann, "foster-brother" was a court title of honor, like the phrase "the friend of the king" used in the Old Testament. It is interesting to recall in this connection that Joanna, the wife of Chuzas, the steward of this same Herod, was also a follower of Christ, Lk. 8.3.

"In the days of the apostles, and as long as Christianity was a proscribed religion, the body of the membership of the Church consisted of the humbler and middle ranks of society. The wealthy and noble will always be few in comparison with others in the Church, for this if for no other reason, that there are fewer of them" (Dr. James Orr).

And as the church at Antioch carried on the services of prayer and worship, and fasted—"in other words, as they put aside everything that would have had the effect of deadening their response to the Divine Voice"—a forward movement was divinely inaugurated.

"The great enterprises of the Church always begin as this did, with fasting and prayer."

It was the Holy Spirit's urge that made them decide to send away Barnabas and Saul for the mission to the Gentiles, Rom. 1.1.

"The Holy Spirit inspired in these people a sense of proportion. They realized that their church was only one part of a large scheme, of which God reserved unto himself the plan. In the hearts of Barnabas and Saul the claim of God was ringing loudly—not as a whisper or hint or idea but as a call. The time came when everybody in the assembly heard the Voice—as a challenge—'Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' And one can only make the comment that if the Catholicism of Rome had treated Wycliffe and Luther and Calvin and Huss as the disciples treated Barnabas and Paul, if the Episcopacy of England had thus treated Wesley and Fox, how different might have been the story of mankind during the last five centuries!" (P. Whitwell Wilson).

"The ablest were sent as foreign missionaries. I have known a generosity in giving money and a selfishness in withholding men. Antioch was not lacking in the readiness to send forth her most eloquent preachers. The progress of that missionary endeavor should remain to all time an impressive lesson to churches and mission boards in the selection of missionaries. The heathen need the best" (Dr. Geo. W. McDaniel).

The assembly fasted and prayed and laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul, and then sent them away. Recall Lk. 6.12,13. This service we may compare with our farewell services for missionaries. The laying hands upon the two may be taken as indicating that the thought of the church was: We, who cannot go to the work of evangelization are sending away with our blessing these two men as our representatives. "As I go down into the mine, I depend upon you to hold the rope," said William Carey as he was about to leave home for India. The church at Antioch was standing by its missionaries, offering prayers for the success of their labors.

"It is a little heroic even to believe in foreign missions. If we may not be among the heroes, let us, like the church of old, hear the Holy Spirit and go with Paul and Barnabas down to their ship and lay our hands on them and send them away with all our sympathy and blessings. So, perhaps, we can catch something of their heroism. So, in our quiet and home-keeping lives, the idea of Christianity may become more clear, Christ our Lord more dear, and we ourselves be made more faithful, more generous, and more brave" (Phillips Brooks).

II. THE MISSIONARIES PREACH IN CYPRUS, verses 4, 5. Barnabas and Paul were under the orders of their Commander-in-chief; they were sent forth by the Holy Spirit. From Antioch they went down the River Orontes to the seaport of Seleucia, sixteen miles distant, where they took ship for the island of Cyprus. There were several reasons for going to Cyprus first: the island was only a few hours' sail from Seleucia; Barnabas was a native of Cyprus, and he would have friends there; the copper mines on the island had attracted a large settlement of Jews, and some of them were already Christians, for Cypriotes had been the first to sail to Antioch and proclaim Christ there, Acts 11.20; 21.16. The nearest harbor of Cyprus on the eastern coast was Salamis, and here the missionaries stopped and preached in the synagogues of the Jews. As traveling Jewish preachers, as we shall find, they were everywhere given at least one hearing in the Jewish synagogue.

Their attendant, or courier, on this journey was John Mark, a cousin or nephew of Barnabas, Col. 4.10, he who later wrote our second Gospel. He remained with

Barnabas and Paul until they reached Perga, where he deserted them, returning to Jerusalem.

III. THE FIRST BATTLE-ROYAL WITH PAGANISM, verses 7-12. Barnabas and Paul traversed the island throughout its length, preaching as they went. At Paphos, on the west, they met the Proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding, and with him a sorcerer, a Jew named Bar-Jesus, or Elymas, as he was called in Greek. It is interesting that a Roman inscription has been found in which Sergius Paulus is expressly named as holding the office of proconsul. From the writers we know that magicians of all kinds were favorably received in Roman society, and it is in no way remarkable that one of them should have gained an influence with the proconsul.

"It is very generally assumed that Elymas was a mere vulgar impostor, but in those days there was no dividing line between science and magic. The student of science dabbled in sorcery, the magician or sorcerer had often a wonderful knowledge of the power of nature. Perhaps the most striking illustration of this is in connection with the science of medicine. On the island of Cos and at Epidaurus in Greece the ruins of medical sanatoria have been laid bare, which show that gross superstition was associated with a knowledge of the principles of hygiene which the world has only recovered within the last fifty years. Let it not therefore be placed to the discredit of Sergius Paulus that he sought the society of one who professed to hold communion with powers unseen" (Dr. C. N. Johnston). "All the Greek and Latin literature of the empire, from Horace to Lucian, abounds in proof of the prevalent creduity of this skeptical period. The great Marius had in his camp a Syrian prophetess, by whose divinations he regulated the progress of his campaigns. As Brutus, at the beginning of the Republic, had visited the oracle at Delphi, so Pompey, Crassus, and Cæsar, at the close of the Republic, when the oracles were silent, sought information from Oriental astrology. No picture of the great Latin satirist Juvenal is more powerfully drawn than that in which he shows us the Emperor Tiberius 'sitting on the rock of Capri with his flock of Chaldeans round him.' "

Sergius Paulus desired to hear the Word of God and sent for Barnabas and Paul, but Elymas opposed them and endeavored to turn the proconsul from the faith. The sorcerer knew that if the proconsul accepted Paul's faith he himsef would lose his power over the proconsul, and doubtless much material advantage as well. We may imagine the sorcerer arguing as does the proud Greek in Robert Browning's Cleon:—

"Thou canst not think a mere barbarian Jew,
As Paulus proves to be, one circumcised,
Hath access to a secret shut from us?
Thou wrongest our philosophy, O King,
In stooping to inquire of such an one,
As if his answer could impose at all!"

But Saul, who is also called Paul (and from now on Luke uses only the Roman name of Paul for Paul is committed to the task of evangelizing the Roman world), filled with the Holy Spirit, bitterly denounced the sorcerer. " 'You mass of trickery and rascality,' that is the way Paul begins, and he follows it up with another shot —'You son of the Devil,' and not content with that he hastens to add, 'You enemy of everything that is right, will you never stop diverting the straight paths of the Lord?' " (Dr. Jefferson).

"In a universe like this, built upon truth, in which everything depends on men's willingness to believe and speak the truth, what a monster a man is who earns his living by making and selling lies! It is the lover of truth whose soul rises in fierce and implacable antagonism to men who deceive. If we are not so hot as Paul, it is because we are not so noble as he" (Dr. Charles E. Jefferson).

Paul then announced to the sorcerer that he should become blind—and this at once came about. "Virtually Paul pronounced sentence: If you choose to be spiritually and mentally blind, then be blind physically. Learn what blindness really is" (R. C. Gillie). We may note in passing that in Korea today the profession of witchcraft is reserved for the blind.

The blindness of Elymas helped to open the eyes of the proconsul. When he saw Elymas seeking someone to lead him by the hand, Sergius Paulus believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

"The miracle had its place as the bellman of the church, but the preacher's message was the secret of salvation. If the miracle had been more surprising than the message, Christianity would not have occupied the place that it does today. The doctrine of Christ is infinitely more convincing than any miracle he ever worked. If the great truths of the gospel do not find us, no sign or specter will avail. The grand appeal of the gospel is not to our wonder, but to the conscience and heart" (Dr. W. L. Watkinson).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What have we learned about Barnabas? What important facts in the life of Paul have we studied? Where was Antioch?

Why Antioch in Syria is Notable. We learned last week that the church at Antioch in Syria was the first church in which the gospel was preached to Gentiles as well as Jews, and that it was the first church whose members were called Christians. Today we learn that it became famous for yet a third reason—it was the first church to inaugurate foreign missions. The formal consecration of Barnabas and Saul to the work of missionaries was the beginning of the great missionary movement.

The first departure from the witnessing to Jews in Jerusalem and Judæa was made by Philip when he preached to the Samaritans and baptized the Ethiopian. The second departure was made by Peter when he baptized Cornelius, a Gentile. The third was made by the unnamed Christians who were natives of Cyprus and Cyrene, when they preached the gospel freely to the Gentile inhabitants of Antioch and founded there a church which included Gentiles. The next great departure we hear about today, when this church at Antioch sent forth Barnabas and Paul as the first foreign missionaries.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

We have now come to the first of Paul's great missionary journeys. From Antioch in Syria he went with Barnabas and John Mark down the Orontes River by boat, or along the shore on foot, to Seleucia, the port on the coast.

From Selucia on a clear day the island of Cyprus is visible. This is the largest island in the eastern Mediterranean. Its name was probably derived from the Greek word *Kupros,* copper, for it had rich copper mines. The three missionaries set sail for Cyprus and landed at *Salamis.* Then they traversed the breadth of the island to Paphos, its chief city, on the west.

For the Blackboard. Paul's First Missionary Journey (with Barnabas). Acts 13, 14. A. D. 47-49 (according to Ramsay). Antioch in Syria; Salamis and Paphos in Cyprus.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Dr. F. B. Meyer aptly says that if the old custom of illuminating the Scriptures were still in vogue, this thirteenth chapter of The Acts would have its initial letter richly embossed, and in the device would be a ship. It is one of the most important chapters in the Bible, as marking the beginning of the great missionary crusade of the Church. Here we see the beginning of the world evangelization which Christ commanded. Here we have exemplified two of the basic principles of the missionary appeal—that Christianity was meant to be a world religion, and that it was meant to be spread by individual evangelism. To imbue your class with the missionary spirit, or to arouse that spirit, if it already exists, to greater zeal, is your opportunity throughout the remainder of our study of The Acts. He who would arouse others must himself be first aroused.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE HOLY SPIRIT IN FOREIGN MISSIONS

Beginning the Lesson. We have seen how Paul's Jewish descent, his Roman citizenship, his Greek environment in Tarsus, his rabbinical training in Jerusalem, his conversion at Damascus, his years of solitude and meditation in Arabia, and his longer years of pioneer missionary effort in Syria and Cilicia had helped to

prepare him for his apostolate to the nations. Looking back upon his life Paul could not see, and we do not see, how he could have been better equipped than he actually was by the various influences which had molded his character and shaped his career and all unconsciously had fitted him for world evangelism. Everything had helped to make him ready for the work he now had to do. When Barnabas called him from Tarsus to Antioch, a year of testing there made it apparent to all that the Holy Spirit had separated him for work in wider fields.—Professor D. A. Hayes, in Paul and His Epistles.

How the Holy Spirit Puts Forth Missionaries. I wonder how they came to be so sure that thus the Spirit of God spake. I do not believe at all that it was a sudden prophetic utterance given to some one ecstatic believer. I believe that in the midst of this church's prayerful life there grew up a conviction that the Lord had been enlarging, training and equipping two of their fellow-laborers, and that the meaning of it all was that the great harvest field was calling these two out of their midst. God had set the light of great enterprises in the eyes of these two men and was preparing them. One of them had kept a secret word for long in his heart: "I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." He knew that the time of its full revealing would come, and presently it did come. The church interpreted it for him. It was by the sight of the great, mighty-faithed Barnabas, and the indomitable energy and courage of Paul among these Christians of Antioch, by the unspeakable conviction that there was that come to pass in these two which could not be cabined within the discussions of a local church meeting, that the irresistible missionary argument was brought to bear upon this church.

Now I cannot but feel that it is in this fashion that God speaks to the church still concerning its too easily forgotten tasks. God is always putting forth his men. They arise with the call of God plainly upon them, the capacity for long visions shining in them. He finds them in a little Syrian community, and lo! Paul and Barnabas are given to make great history. He moves in a Jesuit fraternity and lo! Francis Xavier becomes pioneer of the cross. He is at work in little Christian communities, in Scotch hamlets and Welsh villages, and amid English factories and workshops, and now it is a Moffat and a Livingstone, a Morrison or a Mackay, a Chalmers or a Griffith John that is thrust forth. God finds them, and when the live and loyal churches in the midst of which they have arisen look upon them in Spirit-opened eyes, they know that in their appearing the Spirit is speaking to the churches.—Thomas Yates.

The Source of Missionary Power. The source of the spiritual vitality and power of any Christian movement is prayer. Our hope and confidence in this enterprise of world-wide missions are chiefly placed, not in the extent and strength of the missionary organization; not in the number and power of the missionary force; not in the fulness of the treasury and in well-appointed material equipment; not in the achievements of the past, even those of a spiritual character; not in the experience acquired by centuries of Christian missions; not in the methods and agencies which have been devised; not in the brilliancy and popularity of the leaders of the missionary movement at home and abroad; not in statesmanlike and far-sighted policies and plans; not in enthusiastic forward movements and inspiring watchwords—on none of these considerations do we rely principally, for it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." The source of the power of any spiritual movement is God, and the energies of God are released in answer to prayer.—Dr. John R. Mott, in The Pastor and Modern Missions.

We are Reticent about Claiming Divine Guidance in our Acts. The method of God is not different today from that which prevailed in the past. In our time a church convention, after due consideration of qualifications and opportunities, decides to send missionaries to some promising field, and on the minutes of the session it is recorded as an action of the body that has exercised its consecrated wisdom in the transaction. If the writers of the apostolic age had been chronicling the event, they would have written that the Spirit said to the church: Separate me these men for the work to which I have called them. Both records would be true, but the second would be in greater harmony with all the facts. We have not yet learned to write the story of the church or the proceedings of Christian bodies in such vivid and vital terms.—Editorial in The Christian Century.

Missionary Statesmanship. A few years ago foreign missionary enterprise belonged to the region of sentiment and now it has been transferred to that of statesmanship. Formerly Christian thought wandered out in a romantic and irresponsible

way among lands far distant, and the result was infinitely picturesque but in many cases it was hardly taken seriously beyond the inner circle of the devout. Today every intelligent believer in Christianity knows that mere zeal is not all that is required for effective work in the foreign field nor is he much moved by such curious motives as the desire to hasten the end of the world and the coming of Christ by completing the preaching itinerary of the world. Instead of that he takes foreign missionaries seriously as a necessary department of all real statesmanship.

In the first place, in the choice of the field we have to distinguish between races that have a future before them and races which are obviously dying out. The means of reaching the population of the world with Christian propaganda is lamentably limited, and since we cannot at the present time hope to reach all, we must select those among whom we shall labor. Statesmanship demands that the gospel shall be sent to the fountainheads of future civilization, and to lands which will in a generation or two exercise the strongest influence upon the world.

A second matter of detail is the choice of missionaries. In the days when missions were a sentiment, the only requirements for a foreign missionary's career were piety and zeal. But, when one comes to reflect upon it, it is surely obvious that the work of a foreign missionary is one of the most highly specialized of all the professions, and that further qualifications are necessary to insure fitness for effective work in it.—Dr. John Kelman, in Some Aspects of International Christianity.

Delaying the Carrying out of the Command. Our belief that we are commissioned to give the gospel to the whole world is not yet a dominant motive in our life. We have believed it enough to give a little money, and send a few men and women to foreign lands. But we have not yet comprehended that the Church is primarily a missionary agency, and that we have been delaying instead of completing the charge of our Lord for nineteen hundred years. What the Church is for is not chiefly to be a safe and comfortable nursery for believers in Jesus. It is to be a mighty army for the conquest of the world. Its richly provided home in lands already Christianized is to be the base of supply for an active and ceaseless campaign, in which the banner of the cross is to be carried everywhere over the wide world.—The Presbyterian.

For Discussion. 1. Missionaries whom our church has sent out.

2. Sorceries and "isms" of today which lead men from the truth.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why do you think John Mark left just as the hard work was beginning? 2. Compare Paul's address in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia with Peter's at Pentecost and Stephen's. 3. What did Paul mean by saying the Jews had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life? 4. What is the meaning of the last clause of verse 48?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE BEGINNING OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Beginning the Lesson. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God": this is the way in which Paul begins his Epistle to the Romans. On his way to Damascus Paul received his call to be an apostle. Today we see how he was "separated" for his great work. Where is the scene? The place is the new church there, founded by whom? Led by whom? Two weeks ago we learned how those Christians set apart their money for the benefit of the home Church at Jerusalem. Today we see how they set apart their men for foreign missionary work.

"The greatest missionary book in the world is the Bible; the greatest missionary book in the Bible is The Acts of the Apostles; the greatest missionary chapter in The Acts is the thirteenth; the greatest missionary verses in the thirteenth chapter are the first and third verses. It is a great moment in the life of Paul. It is a great moment of new and wide beginnings. It is a moment that bears fruit up to this hour." See The Text Explained.

My Favorite Missionary Text. It is this: "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus."

It is my favorite for these, among other, reasons:

1. It is a vivid, actual, living picture and so stirs a man of my own rather simple type, who finds it difficult to grasp or be inspired by an abstract idea till it is seen in action.

2. Historically it is the precise moment at which the foreign missionary enter-

prise actually began. The fact that we are Christians ourselves dates back to that obedience of those men in that little ship. They took the little tree of Christianity and transplanted it from the cramping flower-pot of Judaism into the soil of humanity—of the whole world.

3. Conversely, it connects our missionary enterprise up with theirs. Our missions are "The Acts of the Apostles" running in "serial" form to the end of time.

4. It shows the young church—itself in a heathen city surrounded by foes—sending as its foreign missionaries its absolute best.

5. It is an apparently tiny act which, in simple fact, when looked at down the perspective of the centuries, is seen to have changed the history of the world.

6. It gets back to the ultimate and eternal power of missions—the Holy Spirit of God urgent in a man and backed by the church.—Basil Mathews.

Our Golden Text. When the Duke of Wellington was asked by a chaplain whether he thought it worth while to preach the gospel to the Hindus, he replied with the question, "What are your marching orders?" "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," was the only possible reply. "Then follow your orders," said Wellington, "your only duty is to obey."

A Hindu, Narayan Sheshadri, a Brahmin (the highest caste in India), accepted the Christian faith and became a missionary among his own people. When he visited our country he was introduced to an audience as an evidence that must satisfy everyone of the value of Christian missions. This introduction touched the pride of the lordly Brahmin, and he began his talk thus:—

"My friends, if I had ever had any doubt as to the value of Christian missions, that doubt would be removed as I stand here and look into your bright and intelligent faces, and consider the facts in the case. When my ancestors were among the lordliest persons on earth, considering themselves, and being considered by others, as one with the gods, worthy of divine honors, your ancestors were among the most degraded of human beings, looked down on and despised by those of my race. Yet by Christian missionaries your fathers were sought out and won to Christ, in consequence you now sit here, clothed and in your right mind, as a living proof of the value of Christian missions, concerning the interests of which we are to consult together this afternoon."

One who long afterwards recalled Mr. Sheshadri's speech, added: "That was a truth we do not always consider as we should. I recalled that when the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, visited India with Dean Stanley, it was said that the India officials sent into the jungle and lassoed a few specimens of the ancient race from which the English people are supposed to have descended."

In the time of Paul most of England was covered with morasses and dense forests, in which wild beasts abounded. The people were divided into tribes that were often at war with one another. Their clothing was chiefly of hides and furs. They had never heard of Jesus Christ. They worshiped many gods—gods of sky and wood and mountain and stream. The oak was especially venerated. Their priests, who were called Druids, professed to practise magic and this gave them great power over the people.

When the Romans conquered Britain they civilized it, taught the people the arts and crafts of peace, and, best of all, brought to them the gospel. No one knows who was the first foreign missionary to our forefathers in Britain—"perchance some Christian trader from Gaul, or a Christian legionary from Italy, or even a Christian slave, was the first who brought the Good News."

"It is owing to Christian missions and Christian missionaries that we are, under God, now above the level, or the low depths, of our ancestors. All the civilization and the refinement and the Christianity that we enjoy in America we, as a people, owe to this glorious agency. What a duty we have to the cause of Christian missions, and what gratitude we should have to Christian missions in view of what they have done for us!"

The Need of Human Help. In George Eliot's beautiful poem about the famous violin maker in Cremona we read these striking words:

"Not God himself can make man's best
Without best men to help him . . .
. . . . . 'Tis God gives skill,
But not without men's hands: he could not make
Antonio Stradivaris's violins
Without Antonio."

Every one has a work to do in the world that God cannot do without him. "All authority hath been given me," said Jesus, and then there followed logically this command, "Go ye therefore." He needed his disciples to carry on his work, and he still needs disciples to complete it.

"Wanted." It was only a small piece of wood, about a foot and a half in length and six inches across, and it was lying with a pile of earth and paving-stones, and lamps and pipes, close to some excavations on the Thames Embankment. As I passed by one day last week, I saw written on this piece of wood the word "Wanted," and I knew in a minute that that bit of timber was set apart, and also that it had a lesson to teach, lying there in the May sunshine, in that busy road, waiting for some workman to come along and use it.

It had been marked "Wanted" by somebody, that was clear. Not by chance had it been scribbled on; a brain had been at work, an eye had seen and approved it, a hand had used the chalk; and so that bit of wood was worth something for some special purpose.

I suspect that it was to fit in some place in that particular bit of road-mending; but had that word not been written on it, very likely some night-watchman might have chopped it up to light his fire, or some careless hand might have thrown it on the scrap heap.

It had a use, and this thought came to me, *so have we all!* How often in life we feel that others have all the gifts and opportunities; but we have ours too, and they must be put to the best account if we are to be of use in the world.

Do you know that in life it is possible to be divinely marked by God as his "wanted" soldier, worker, servant, or helper? We shall know if we are marked as fit for his service, and others will know, too! The world will need no badge to single us out; Christ's love will be seen shining in our faces, and people will turn to us in their troubles for help—such as we can give.

There is plenty of spiritual "road-mending" in the world today. Are we willing for our bit of service to fit in the corner God sees it will fill?

Boys and girls, you are wanted somewhere for his work. Pray about it; and when you are on your knees ask yourself the question: "Has he marked me 'wanted,' and am I willing to be used just when and where God shall choose?"—Condensed from The Christian.

A Blind Sorcerer's Efforts to Learn the Word. A missionary in Korea tells an interesting story about a man who was a member of the guild to which the sorcerer Bar-Jesus belonged. In Korea witchcraft is a profession, and it is reserved for the blind. This sorcerer became a Christian and was eager to learn the Bible. In order to do this he cut up Standard Oil tin cans into five thousand small squares. He made a hole through each square and threaded it on a string, making indentations in the corners to indicate various letters of the Korean alphabet. The final consonants he indicated with two thousand pieces of wood of varying shapes. When all this was done, as a friend read to him from John's Gospel he formed sentence after sentence by threading his tin and wooden squares on a string. Then by running his fingers over the crude types he was able to commit to memory the first six chapters. Later he heard about a school for the blind at Pyeng Yang and groped his way there, three hundred miles away, on foot. In a month he had learned to read by the point system. He now thinks that in three years he will have memorized the whole New Testament. He is at work among the hundreds of Korean blind sorcerers trying to lead them to become Christians.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Our communion with the Lord in prayer always leads to fellowship with the Lord in service.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest.—Jesus.

God does not want you in China if you cannot witness in your own city: he has no use in India for one who is dumb in his own house.—Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.

The glory is not in the task, but in the doing it for him.—Jean Ingelow.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. For what is Antioch of Syria remembered in the history of the early church? 2. For what is Antioch of Pisidia remembered? 3. When did Christ tell his disciples to preach first to the Jews? (Mt. 10.5,6; Lk. 24.47.) 4. How did the Jews decide their own fate? 5. How did Jesus say each one does this, as recorded in Jn. 12.47, 48? 6. Where is the quotation in verse 47 found? (Footnote of Bible.)

THE GOSPEL IN ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA

GOLDEN TEXT: Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples. Isaiah 55.4

LESSON Acts 13.13-52 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 9.1-7

ACTS 13.42 And as they went out, they besought that these words might be spoken to them the next sabbath. 43 Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed. 46 And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*,

I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,
That thou shouldest be for salvation unto
the uttermost part of the earth.

48 And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews urged on the devout women of honorable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of their borders. 51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE IMPRESSION MADE BY PAUL'S FIRST PREACHING AT PISIDIAN ANTIOCH, verses 42, 43. See The Historical Background. As Paul and Barnabas went out of the synagogue, the people besought Paul to address them the following Sabbath. When the congregation was dismissed, many devout proselytes (God-fearing Gentiles—their presence in the synagogue gives evidence of the kindly feeling existing between Jews and Gentiles in this city), followed Paul and Barnabas, who urged them "to hold fast the measure of faith they already had, and to expect further divine favor in answer to their steadfastness."

II. THE JEALOUSY OF THE JEWS, verses 44, 45. Paul must have been a most convincing speaker, for the next Sabbath almost the whole city was gathered to hear him. The sight of such a crowd filled the hearts of the Jews with jealousy, and they contradicted Paul's words and slandered the apostles.

It must have been a stormy scene when their hatred broke forth in contradictions and blasphemy. Jealousy unchecked has many other bitter evils in its train. One who finds that jealousy is playing an active part in his thoughts should resolutely think less about himself and force himself to see things from the other's point of view.

Modern Jews would find the same objections in this address which the Jews of Antioch did so long ago. "Jewish feelings are intense on these subjects. Thus a Jew said lately to a Hebrew Christian that he would like to die before him so as to hear what the turncoat would say for himself when he came to stand before God. Another said to the same evangelist that he would willingly give up ten years of his life, if it would send the mission agent so much the sooner to the valley of Jehoshaphat for judgment."

III. "LO, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES," verses 46-49. Boldly Paul and Barnabas declared: "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you," for it was Christ's command, Acts 1.8; 3.26. "But you thrust it from you, thus judging yourselves unworthy of eternal life."

"'He came unto his own and his own received him not,' these words are an assertion of the awful ultimateness of the power of free will in man" (Phillips Brooks).

"Every man imputeth himself," says Tennyson. It is a startling thought that by our attitude toward Jesus Christ we reveal our worthiness or unworthiness of eternal life. After a battle with Pompey in which many thousands lost their lives, Cæsar stood on the battlefield and sadly exclaimed, "Alas! he would have it so!" If ours is the way of death instead of the way of life, it is because we would have it so.

Since the Jews had judged themselves unworthy, Paul solemnly declared, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." He was convinced by the response of the Gentiles here that henceforth his mission must be chiefly to Gentiles. And then he quoted Isaiah 49.6—"I have set thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth."

"God took the Jewish candle out of the candle-stick because it would not be the light of the world, and the nation went into darkness," said Dr. Babcock. "It was for the same reason that the Church went into the Dark Ages—it turned its candle into a dark lantern, and said, 'As long as I see the light I do not care who is in the dark.'" Is there a church today in any way like the Jewish candle?

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad: "and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." "This expresses the Pauline and Apostolic doctrine of predestination, according to which God desires the salvation of all men (1 Tim. 2.4; 4.10), but inasmuch as he foresees that some (in the exercise of their free will) will actually repent and believe, while others will refuse to do so, he ordains the former to eternal life, and the latter to eternal death, Rom. 8.28-30" (One Volume Commentary).

"The testimony of the apostles was 'a savor of life unto life or of death unto death,' comments St. Augustine. The same fire reddens the gold and burns the dross; under the same threshing-sledge the grain is cleaned and the chaff is crushed out; by the same press-beam the oil is separated from the dregs."

And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region.

"The pathway of obedience to the call of God will ever be filled with surprising victories. If the churches of today would fling themselves ardently into the costly enterprise of preaching the gospel throughout the world—instead of touching the enterprise with the tips of our fingers, as we are doing—there would be such surprising revelations of the saving grace and power of God as would fill our hearts with wonder and joy, and compel the world to believe in our Lord" (Dr. Charles Brown).

IV. PAUL AND BARNABAS DRIVEN FROM ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA, verses 50-52. The Jews now had recourse to "the devout women of honorable estate, and the chief men of the city," the Roman colonists, the local aristocracy, as Professor Ramsay calls them, who were the high privileged class and held the reins of government. These joined forces with the Jews in persecuting Paul and Barnabas till they were driven from the city.

"The honors and influence which belonged to women in the cities of Asia Minor form one of the most remarkable features in the history of the country. Under the Roman Empire we find women magistrates, presidents of games, and loaded with honors. The custom of the country influenced even the Jews, who in at least one case appointed a woman at Smyrna to the position of ruler of the synagogue. It would be strange if the women had not exercised some influence over St. Paul's fortunes" (Professor Ramsay).

Paul and Barnabas shook off the dust of their feet against them, thus saying, as it were, that they left them to their fate, and proceeded to Iconium. No attempt was made to suppress the new movement itself, for as long as all danger of riots was avoided by expelling the leaders, the Roman rulers were content; and as long as the objects of their jealousy were driven out of the city, the Jews were content for a time.

In spite of the loss of their leaders, the disciples at Pisidian Antioch remained true to their faith, and were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

The religion of Jesus Christ is Good News—why should not all who have heard it be filled with joy? The life of a Christian, whatever his lot, need not be drab and somber, but bright, buoyant, joyous.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What history did Peter recount when he addressed the people at Pentecost? What history did Stephen recall just before his death?

The Defection of John Mark, verse 13. Paul and his company sailed from Paphos to Perga in Pamphylia, and there John Mark left them and returned to

Jerusalem. Evidently he practically deserted in a time of need. Whether he left because fearful of dangers ahead, or because he disapproved of Paul's methods, or because he lacked perseverance, or because of any of the many other reasons that have been offered, cannot be known; we know only that his departure greatly displeased Paul and was the seed of trouble between Paul and Barnabas: see Acts 15.37-40. Barnabas, who was John Mark's uncle (or cousin) readily overlooked the fault.

Paul's Address in the Synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. From Perga Paul and Barnabas went on to Antioch of Pisidia, and on the Sabbath the rulers in the synagogue asked them to address the people. There were no officials whose duty it was to read or speak; the ruler called whom he would to the platform for these services. The scribes, who were the copyists of the Scriptures and the lawyers of the Jews, and the rabbis, the learned doctors of the law, were the ones who usually expounded the Scriptures, though any Israelite of ability could perform this service. Professor Ramsay concludes that Paul and Barnabas took seats in some special place, thus indicating that they desired to address the people, or else that previously they had made known to these rulers their character and mission as teachers. Paul was a Jewish rabbi, and probably wore some insignia that distinguished him as such.

Paul stood, and in his speech began with their own Jewish history. The Jews never tired of hearing this. And then he went on to show that in persecuting and killing Jesus the Jews had been fulfiling prophecy, for Jesus was in very truth God's promised Messiah. With Paul's sermon compare Peter's in Chapter II, and Stephen's in Chapter VII.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The peninsula which we now call Asia Minor was divided for administrative purposes into the Roman Provinces of Asia on the west; Bithynia and Pontus on

Roman Provinces of Asia Minor

the north; Galatia and Cappodocia in the center; and Lycia, Pomphylia, and Cilicia on the south. Notice on the map the location of each.

From Cyprus Paul and his companions sailed to Attalia, a seaport of Pamphylia, and then proceeded to *Perga,* the capital of that province. Perga was several miles from the coast, on the River Cestrus, which was then navigable.

Paul did not tarry long on this hot marshy plain. Professor Ramsay's theory is that he suffered an attack of malarial fever (Gal. 4.13) and was obliged to seek higher levels. Paul and Barnabas pushed on northward, crossing the Taurus Range into the province of Galatia on the high central tableland of the peninsula. It was a hard journey of a hundred miles toiling up the rugged mountainside through narrow gorges, in "perils of robbers," 2 Cor. 11.26.

Antioch of Pisidia, where Paul and Barnabas first preached, was in the prov-

ince of Galatia and the district of Phrygia; it bordered the district of Pisidia, however, and might therefore be called "of" or "towards" Pisidia. It was nearly four thousand feet above sea level, and its pure air would prove refreshing and health-giving after a sojourn in Perga.

Pisidian Antioch had been made by Augustus Cæsar the center of all the Roman colonies in Asia Minor. It was one of the sixteen Antiochs founded by Seleucus Nikator and named after his father Antiochus: do not confound it with Antioch in Syria. It ws Antioch in Syria where the disciples were first called Christians and from which Paul started out on his three great missionary journeys. It was Antioch of Pisidia (Asia Minor) where Paul made his first public address that has come down to us, and where he first publicly turned to the Gentiles.

Iconium was an important city on the border of the two districts of Galatia called Lycaonia and Phrygia. It was a very ancient city, as old as Damascus, Professor Ramsay believes; he records the legend that it was built before the flood and rebuilt immediately afterwards, and that the Phrygian language was the primitive language of mankind. It is today a flourishing city on the Bagdad Railroad.

Ask your pupils to draw a map of the Eastern Mediterranean world and trace Paul's journey from Antioch of Syria to Antioch of Pisidia.

For the Blackboard. To your record of last week add: Perga in Pamphylia, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

A sailor in a foreign port once relieved his mind to Father Taylor. "You seem to be a good sort of chap who knows what's what," he began, "so I will tell you what I likes along o' preachin'. When a man is a-preachin' at me I want him to take somert hot out of his heart and shove it into mine—that's what I calls preachin'."

Study Paul's sermon in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia, and all of his recorded words, and you will see that he always met this sailor's desire. It is a good way for teachers as well as for preachers.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
PAUL'S PREACHING AND ITS EFFECTS

Beginning the Lesson. Paul's sermon in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia was amazing because of the way in which he addressed the Gentiles. "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God," he began, and by the latter phrase he meant the Gentiles. He coupled them with the race of Abraham—"Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham and those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this salvation sent."

The theme of his sermon has well been called "God's Greatest Gift to Us." He recalled the glories of Israel's past, from Moses to David, recounted the goodness of God to them and noted especially his promise of a Savior; he told them that Jesus, who was announced by John as the Savior, had fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures by his death and resurrection; and then he urged them all to accept him, for in no other way could they be saved. He closed with a prophecy of Habakkuk, bidding them beware lest in rejecting this salvation they called down upon themselves as severe a judgment as that inflicted by the Chaldean armies on the Jewish nation when it refused to heed Habakkuk's warning.

The Effect of the Sermon upon Jews and upon Gentiles. The Jews thrust the Word of God from them, and judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. The reasons for their refusal of the message were prejudice and selfishness. These men saw that the Gentiles also were listening with eagerness, and that Paul was proclaiming to them the same possibility of privilege as he was proclaiming to the Hebrews. The question of truth was forgotten, and the question of personal privilege became paramount. By the closing of the mind against truth, in favor of an ancient prejudice, they counted themselves unworthy of life. They contradicted the things Paul said, they blasphemed.

But look at the Gentiles. Here we see the other side. These men listened to the Word, and they allowed the truth to make its appeal to them. To these men truth was supreme, and therefore the true sense of the new privilege was created. The effect of truth in every individual life is conditioned by the opening or closing of the mind. There is a very significant phrase in the Gospel according to John, "the honest heart." Where there is the honest heart, the open mind, the willingness to receive the truth, to know truth, to follow truth at all costs, the result of the preaching of this doctrine of the apostle is always that of life. But where for any reason the mind is closed against the truth, where prejudice enters in, and arguments are created as the outcome of prejudice, then the result is that of death.—Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, in The Acts of the Apostles.

Thrusting the Word of God from One. Writing in The Evangelistic Note, Dr. W. J. Dawson draws this picture of a bird that missed the appointed hour of its migration:

"Yonder soars the winged army, and the air is full of imperious calls and summons. It wheels and lingers in the sunset, but this one foolish creature still hangs back. Then at last the great host begins to move southwards, and silence falls upon the empty fields. The sun shines next day, but with diminished beams, and this foolish creature is not afraid. And then some night the autumn storm bursts upon the reaped fields, and after that comes the frost, and then the deep snow, and the shepherd on the hills finds in the snow a little dead bird, starved and frozen."

From this Dr. Dawson draws our lesson. "Can we doubt that that is also a picture of things in human life? Can we hide from ourselves the truth that in some way men do miss the seasons of God's grace? Is it not possible to resist the Spirit, to repulse the heavenly Prompter, to dismiss the warning impulse? This I know, that here, and within the limits of this world, we do see men miss their last chances. We do see them refuse the grace of God, and count themselves unworthy of eternal life.

"Don't wait, don't doubt, don't linger. Observe the season, and settle things with God now."

Paul's Alternative. Of Napoleon it has been said that "He never for a moment lost sight of his way onward in the dazzle and uproar of present circumstances." For Paul there is always far more of uproar than of dazzle in his circumstances, of opposition than of glory, but never once does he lose sight of his goal. The Jews in Antioch of Pisidia will not hear him; he will turn, then, to the Gentiles. He will go on and on, till he has made Christ known throughout the Roman Empire, ceasing not in his forward movement till death itself arrests him.

"Other things being equal, supposing it were the last chance and you the last preacher, which ought you to preach to—the man who has had the gospel offered him every day of his life for fifty years, or the one who does not so much as know that there is a gospel?" questions Professor E. E. Hale. "Paul made his decision very definitely. 'Lo,' said he, 'we turn to the Gentiles.' It was very fortunate for us here in America that he did so.

"Of course we do not have the sharp alternative offered to us that the text presents. The Church today can preach at home and abroad, too. But we shall do well to remember this lesson when we have to decide which is the more important. We ought to remember that when two things are good, it may be that one is more important than the other."

The Effects of Paul's Preaching to the Gentiles. The Gentiles, when they heard Paul's decision to preach to them, were glad and glorified the word of God; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region. By their choice the Jews judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, and by their choice the Gentiles judged themselves worthy.

For Discussion. 1. The responsibility of unbelief.

2. Stirring up others.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who were Jupiter and Mercury, and what were the characteristics of each? 2. Why did the people of Lystra call Paul Mercury? 3. Contrast Paul's speech to the people of Lystra with that to the people of Pisidian Antioch, and explain why they are so different. 4. Bring to class an instance of great tribulation and victory in modern missionary work.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
EARLY VICTORIES OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Beginning the Lesson. Last week we left Paul and Barnabas on the island of Cyprus. They took ship for the coast of Asia Minor, as we call that peninsula now, and after a short stay at Perga went north to Antioch. This is not the Antioch in Syria whence Paul and Barnabas started. There were several cities by that name, just as we have several cities in the United States called by the same name, such as Springfield and Rochester and Watertown. This Antioch was in one of the Roman Provinces of Asia Minor, called Galatia, and in or close to the district of Pisidia. Point it out on the map.

Coin of Antioch of Pisidia

As their custom was, Paul and Barnabas on the Sabbath went to the Jewish synagogue. A Jewish synagogue was always a plain, rectangular building erected on the highest spot in the neighborhood, or having a pole on the roof to make it conspicuous. The chief seats were around the ark, or chest, at one end of the building, and in this ark the sacred rolls were kept. Before the ark hung a veil and lamps. In front of it was a platform with a reading-desk or pulpit. In the congregation the men were separated from the women. During the prayers all stood and faced the direction of Jerusalem.

The ruler of the synagogue sent an attendant to Paul and Barnabas and asked one of them to address the people. This was not unusual, for there were no regular preachers. (Continue with The Historical Background.)

"Lo, We Turn to the Gentiles." In the Scientific Institute of New York there is a remarkable diamond. For a hundred days this diamond had been under the revolutions of a grinding wheel that was revolving so rapidly it traversed in that time a distance equal to three times the distance around the globe! The wheel was working, moreover, under a weight of forty pounds instead of the customary two pounds, and yet it could make no impression upon the diamond. The lapidary was exhausted, but the diamond was uncut. Nothing could be done with it, for a diamond in the rough has no beauty, and the jeweler sent it to the Institute as a curiosity.

Like this refractory diamond were the Jews of Christ's day and Paul's. One who reads the Gospels and the Book of the Acts continuously, paying heed to the pressure that was brought to bear on the Jews to accept Jesus as the Christ, and seeing them reject him again and again, must feel that the task was a hopeless one. This belief came to Paul at Antioch in Pisidia. Here he made his resolve that henceforth, though he would still offer the gospel to the Jews first in whatever city he went, his main effort should be for the Gentiles, the diamonds in the rough that would not resist the shaping hand of God.

Three Great Missionary Victories. The history of missions is one continuous story of the invasion of the impossible. Take three illustrations: (1) When Robert Moffat set out for Namaqualand, the people of the Cape wept over his certain destruction. "The great chief Africaner will tear you to pieces!" said one. "He will make a drinking-cup of your skull!" exclaimed another. Yet in a few weeks Moffat and Africaner were partners in the sweetest Christian fellowship, and comrades in devoted Christian service!

(2) And again, there is no ghastlier page in our missionary annals than the story of Liwanika and the Barotse people. I once heard Arnot tell the story. "I do not

know what is in store for these poor tribes," Coillard writes. "The horizon is dark, and the sky very stormy; it seems as if we were witnessing the last days of the Barotse nations. Liwanika has exterminated his enemies, even those whom he feared might one day become his enemies. I never saw such bloodthirsty people." It is a grim and ugly story of brutality, cruelty and carnage. Yet a few years later that very chief, Liwanika, as a Christian ruler, represented his people at the Coronation of King Edward in Westminster Abbey, and went out of his way to show practical sympathy with all aggressive missionary enterprises.

(3) Henry Martyn once said that he would as soon expect to see one rise from the dead as to see a Brahmin become a Christian. Yet in the very Pagoda where a century ago Henry Martyn kneeled in prayer, Christian Brahmins from every province in India recently met to organize a native missionary society under native management, and to be supported entirely by native money! Who believes in impossibilities after that?—H. P. Boreham, in Mountains in the Mist.

Missionary Pioneers. When the first missionaries went to the island of Panay, one of the Philippine group, they were amazed at the number of people in that Roman Catholic country who came to hear them and seemed so eager to have the Bible explained. Nine months only had passed when there was brought to the missionaries a petition saying that the thirteen thousand signers were Protestants and wished to be taught and organized into churches. The missionaries at first thought the people did not know what they were asking for, but they became convinced of the earnestness of these peasants. It was not till some time afterwards that they learned how the way had been prepared for the gospel. Padra Juan, a Roman Catholic priest, had come to Luzon forty years before, and after awhile had been sent to the penal station in Paragua island by the friars because he was "teaching false doctrines," and there he had died. He had gained the love of the peasants, and they had believed in him. He had taught them that Christ was their Savior, he had read to them from his Bible, and he had told them that white men, different from the friars, would some day come to teach them, and they would know they were true teachers because they would have the same Book. The missionaries brought the same Book, the people had learned of Padre Juan's prophecy from their fathers, and they were ready to receive them as the true teachers. Padre Juan was the "living way" that guided their feet.

Said Livingstone on his return home after spending sixteen years in Africa: "I am going back to Africa to make an open path for commerce and Christianity: do *you* carry out the work which I have begun. I leave it with you." His work and that of all other missionaries who have now rest from their labors is left with us to carry on. What are we doing to help in preparing the open paths for Christianity throughout the world?

A World-Winning Spirit. When I look at America today I see in Adoniram Judson, the apostle of the Burmese, a typical American. I see him there, in Burma, after years of apparently perfectly fruitless toil. He is asked by those at home, "What are the prospects there in Burma?" and he sits down in his house and calmly writes home, "The prospects here in Burma are just as bright as the promises of God." Those promises have been fulfilled in Burma since, but I see that calm, cool American spirit waiting in perfect confidence, where there is no sign of the harvest and only the toil of the sowing. Adoniram Judson seems to me to represent the very spirit of the young men and women of the Student Volunteer Movement. There is a strength in that young manhood, there is an activity and an alacrity, there is a consecration, there is a patience, which may win the world for Christ.—Dr. Robert F. Horton, in an Address Delivered in England.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. When Christ as the Life has entered the heart, he must and will as the Light shine out into the surrounding darkness.—Andrew Murray.

We are daily judging ourselves unworthy of divine grace in every act of refusal to accept and rely on it.—Dr. Lyman Abbott.

I care not where I go, or what hardships I endure, if I can only win souls for Christ.—David Brainerd.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did the apostles tear their garments? 2. Of what did Paul's enemies from Antioch and Iconium "persuade" the people of Lystra? 3. How many times in this lesson did Paul show great bravery? 4. Compare the swift change of fortune of the apostles at Lystra with that of Christ at Jerusalem in the last week of his life.

THE GOSPEL IN LYSTRA

GOLDEN TEXT: Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5.10

LESSON Acts 14.1-28 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 46.1-7

ACTS 14.8 And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. 9 The same heard Paul speaking: who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, 10 said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked. 11 And when the multitude saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. 12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. 13 And the priest of Jupiter whose *temple* was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the multitudes. 14 But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out 15 and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: 16 who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. 17 And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. 18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them.

19 But there came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. A CRIPPLE MADE TO WALK, verses 8-10. There being no synagogue at Lystra, Paul began his preaching in the open air. Near him was a man crippled from birth; probably like the cripple whom Peter restored, he sat begging in his accustomed place. Paul noticed the cripple's eager attention to his words, and believing that the man had faith to be made whole, he said to him, "Stand upright on thy feet." Another manuscript (the Codex Bezæ) reads, "In the name of Jesus Christ I bid thee rise and walk." This was just what the man had never been able to do. Compare Christ's words to the man with the palsied arm—"Stretch forth thy hand"; the impossible happened in both cases; the cripple leaped up and walked.

II. THE PEOPLE SEEK TO WORSHIP PAUL AND BARNABAS, verses 11-13. Seeing the cripple walking, the people were so amazed that they cried out in the speech of their province (Lycaonia), "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." Egyptians and Greeks believed that the gods often assumed human bodies and visited the earth to reward the good and punish the evil. Homer, Vergil and Ovid record many such visits. Cowper translates a passage from Homer thus:—

> For, in similitude of strangers, oft
> The gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,
> Repair to populous cities, where they mark
> The outrageous, and the righteous deeds of men.

A special legend of the coming of Jupiter and Mercury to this very region (see the Second Topic) made it natural for the people to call one of the apostles Jupiter and the other Mercury.

Jupiter was their chief god and Mercury was the messenger of the gods. They selected Paul for Mercury because he was the chief speaker. Tradition says that another reason for calling Paul Mercury was because Paul was smaller and less imposing than Barnabas. In 2 Cor. 10.10 Paul quotes his enemies as saying of him, "His bodily presence is weak, and his speech is of no account," and all tradition agrees that he was short of stature. Professor Ramsay gives yet another interesting explanation in his Cities of St. Paul. The same qualities which mark out Paul to us as a leader, marked him out to the populace of Lycaonia as agent and subordinate. The Westerner regards the leader as the active and energetic partner; but the Oriental considers the leader to be the person who sits still and does nothing, while his subordinates speak and work for him. Hence in the truly Oriental religions the chief god sits apart from the world, communicating with it through his messenger and subordinate; the more statuesque figure of Barnabas was therefore taken

PAUL AND BARNABAS AT LYSTRA

as the chief god, and the active orator, Paul, as his messenger who communicated his wishes to men.

"What they said was true in a sense. God had come down in the likeness of men in Jesus Christ. Christ had returned to heaven, having accomplished his work on earth, but now he lived again in the lives of these missionaries who had come to tell the people of God's love and mercy" (Dr. J. R. Miller).

Doubtless Paul and Barnabas, not understanding the Lycaonian dialect, had returned to their abiding place, while the priest of Jupiter, whose temple was before the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and was about to offer sacrifice with the multitude. It is not clear whether these gates were of the temple of Jupiter, of the city, or of the house where Paul was staying. One commentator suggests we assume that the lame man had been at the gate of the temple of Jupiter, and that the crowds were assembled there on the occasion of some great national festival. The priests were on the spot and the bulls and garlands were ready. Instead of sacrificing within the area as usual, the priests brought the oxen to the gates, the scene of the miracle, where the crowd was still collected.

Jupiter and Mercury as Represented on an Ancient Altar
Jupiter holds a scepter and a thunder-bolt; Mercury, a staff and a bag, the emblem of commerce

III. THE PEOPLE RESTRAINED BY PAUL, verses 14-18. When the apostles learned that the priests were on the point of sacrificing to them, they rent their garments in token of their horror, and springing among the people, cried out, "Sirs, why do ye these things?" The people erred from ignorance, and Paul spoke not in anger, but in sorrow. "We are men of natures similar to yours; we are come to bring you good tidings to urge you to turn from these useless acts of adoration, unto God the Creator, who made all things." And then he spoke of God's longsuffering—"In the generations gone by he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways," and then of his merciful goodness to them: they had not been wholly without knowledge of God, for the rain and fruitful seasons, which had filled them with food and gladness, were his gifts that had borne witness to him. Rain was regarded as a special sign of divine favor.

"Thou who hast given me eyes to see
And love this sight so fair,
Give me a heart to find out thee
And read thee everywhere" (Keble).

Sir William Ramsay gives the interesting information that to the present day in Paul's own Asia Minor a bounteous spring flowing from the rock or the earth and transforming the ground through which it flows from a dry desert into a fruitful garden, is called by those who enjoy its benefits, *Hudaverdi,* "God-has-given."

Paul found in the few simple truths of natural religion possessed by the peasants of Lystra, valuable material upon which to base his teaching, and a lever wherewith to lift them to a high conception of God and of true religion.

"And when we take Christ to the great nations of the East, it is not in a spirit of contempt for the only religion they know; it is rather with thankfulness to God that they have any religion, and that God hath not left himself without a witness in their hearts; and when we preach Christ under the shadow of Chinese pagodas and Indian temples, it is only that we may change the lamps of Confucius and Buddha for the brightness of the morning star; for Christ is the desire of all nations, and these great creators of religious thought in a hundred nations kept vigil till he appeared, were his unconscious light bearers, and were as those who watched for the coming of the morning, even of the perfect day of him who is the Light of life (Dr. W. J. Dawson).

IV. THE APOSTLES PURSUED BY ENEMIES, verse 19. It was a long journey of one hundred and seventy miles from Antioch, and of one hundred miles from

Iconium, but the jealous Jews who had driven the apostles from these cities now followed them to Lystra and persuaded the multitude to stone Paul. The people were probably provoked at themselves for having mistaken Paul for a god, and were easily persuaded to turn against him. Read 2 Tim. 3.11. They thought they had killed Paul, and they dragged his body without the city.

"It is but a short way from garlands to cobblestones."

"These Jews from Antioch and Iconium who stoned Paul were as devout and honest as the men who stoned Stephen, and the men who stoned Stephen were as religious and conscientious as the men who crucified Jesus. Conservatism and prejudice and party spirit and pride of opinion and stubbornness and vanity and ambition have a strange way of working together with Godly devotion and devout sincerity and pious zeal for the accomplishment of diabolical ends" (Dr. C. E. Jefferson).

V. THE APOSTLES PROCEED ON THEIR WAY, verse 20. The work of the missionaries had been crowned with success, it seems, for there were disciples brave enough to befriend them. As they stood around him, Paul rose up and entered the city. His standing on his feet after such treatment seems no less a miracle than the walking of the cripple. On the morrow he was able to make a journey of several hours on to Derbe.

Persecution never stopped Paul's work. He knew the danger of opposing that excited throng at Lystra who were bent on worshiping him; the danger of entering the city again after having been left for dead outside the walls; the danger of stopping there on his return journey; but he held that his sufferings were but incidents to be borne in the course of his work, and his courage was undaunted. Can we fail to be influenced by so heroic a life?

VI. THE RETURN JOURNEY, verses 21-26. Derbe was the limit of the First Missionary Journey. Derbe was not far from the Cilician Gates, the pass which leads down to Tarsus, Paul's early home. But Paul did not take this short cut back to his starting point, Antioch of Syria, for he wished to encourage and confirm in the faith the churches which he had established on his outward journey. Accordingly, undaunted by the persecutions endured in those cities, Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps and again visited Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch. In each place they appointed elders to carry on the work. Then they went down to Perga and around to the port of Attalia, whence they sailed back to Seleucia, the port of Antioch in Syria.

"So was it with James Chalmers when he went back to New Guinea after manifold tribulations! So was it with David Hill in China when, after a blow, he put his hand to his forehead and found blood! Back to that place of suffering! And this is the true character of the Lord's own. They go back to where they were treated badly, and this that they might return good for evil. We may test our growth by our feeling toward those who have injured us. If we are ready to go back to the place of stoning with blessings in our hands, then are we partakers of the life and light of Christ" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

VII. REPORTING THE WORK, verse 27. To the church at Antioch in Syria, the apostles told all that God had done through them, especially the great news that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles.

"There have been rehearsals of victories won on fields of battle by great generals, but no rehearsal ever surpassed in interest or importance the simple story these two missionaries told, not of what great generals had done, but what God himself had done through them" (Dr. A. C. Dixson).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What cripple did Peter cause to walk, and what features has that event in common with the curing of the cripple in this lesson? What mob fickleness did we see in a lesson of the First Quarter? Who persecuted Paul and Barnabas at Pisidian Antioch? Who plotted their death at Iconium?

At Iconium. Both Jews and Greeks believed when Paul addressed them in the synagogue of the Jews at Iconium, and the apostles tarried there a long time speaking boldly. Some of the Jews "stirred up" some of the Gentiles, however, and the city was divided in its attitude toward the apostles. Learning that they were to be

stoned, Paul and Barnabas fled to Lystra and Derbe and the region round about in Lycaonia, and there they preached the gospel.

"In Pisidian Antioch," writes Professor Ramsay, "the expulsion was produced by magisterial action; in Iconium it was brought about by mob violence, for it may be assumed that the attempt at stoning the apostles came from the lower classes under Jewish instigation. One sees how well the difference corresponds to the contrasted characters of the two cities, one governed by a Roman aristocracy, the other by a Hellenic body of citizens."

For the Blackboard. To your record of last week add: Lystra, Derbe; Return journey through Lystra, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch, Perga, Attalia, Seleucia, Antioch in Syria.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe were all cities of *Galatia,* the Roman province which extended from north to south across the great central plateau of Asia Minor; the two former were in the district of Phrygia, and the two latter in the district of Lycaonia.

Lycaonia means "The Land of Wolves"; the plain was wild and dreary. *Lystra* was a small city. In its population were a few Romans who formed the local aristocracy, and a few Greeks and Jews, but most of the inhabitants were comparatively barbarous subjects of Rome whose language was a dialect of their own. In the other cities traversed Paul addressed people who had shared to some degree in Greek education.

Derbe lay isolated on the southeastern edge of the Lycaonion plain. The lofty, snow-clad, conical peak of the Taurus Mountains, eight thousand feet in height, kept guard above the city on the south.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

You will find it interesting and suggestive to note in the course of our lessons how Paul varies his methods to suit the needs of his audience. When addressing the Jews at Pisidian Antioch he led from the Law and the Prophets, in which they believed, up to Jesus the Christ, whom they had not accepted; when addressing the ignorant, superstitious heathen of Lystra he made the only point of contact possible, appealing to their appreciation of the gifts of nature and teaching them that back of nature is God, God the Creator and the Giver of all good gifts.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
TRIBULATIONS AND TRIUMPHS OF MISSIONARIES

Beginning the Lesson. On this first missionary journey we see Paul planting his churches in the large cities, expecting the gospel to radiate from these centers of interest to the surrounding districts. We see him bringing the gospel first to his own countrymen, the Jews, and when it was rejected by them, turning to the Gentiles. And we see him when persecuted in one place moving on to the next, undaunted, undisturbed, with zeal undiminished.

Our special topic today is the Tribulations and Triumphs of Missionaries. Through what tribulations have Paul and Barnabas passed on this first missionary journey? What triumphs have they had?

Paul's Persecution at Iconium. Among the Apocryphal Writings of the New Testament is one entitled "The Acts of Paul and Theckla." According to this treatise, Theckla, a maiden of Iconium who was betrothed to a wealthy youth named Thamyris, heard Paul preach and resolved not to marry Thamyris but to follow the fortunes of Paul. Thamyris had both Paul and Theckla arrested. Paul was scourged and expelled from the city, and Theckla was condemned to be burnt. Theckla escaped this and other deaths in a marvelous way; her last days were spent as a preacher at Seleucia. In this legend Paul is described as a "man small in stature, bald-headed, of a good complexion, with eyebrows meeting, and a countenance full of grace. For sometimes he appeared like a man, and sometimes he had, as it were, the face of an angel."

Because of local and historical references in "The Acts of Paul and Theckla" many scholars believe that it was an almost contemporary writing and had some foundation of fact, and they see in it one explanation of the opposition to Paul at Iconium, that his preaching interfered with family life. Whatever the causes, the remembrance of the persecutions endured here remained vivid in Paul's mind. Writing his second letter to Timothy several years later Paul reminds him that he had "followed

his persecutions and sufferings, the persecutions that befell him at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, the persecutions he endured."

Men who Have Wished to Be Worshiped. The Roman Empire deified and worshiped its emperors. In 29 A. D., Augustus Cæsar allowed the diets of the provinces of Asia and Bithynia to erect temples and show divine honor to him. Soon all the chief cities had their Cæsareum and their emperor's festival. In the time of Tiberius one of the reasons given for depriving the city of Cyziars in Asia of its position as a free city was that it had failed to erect a temple to the god Augustus. When Caligula became emperor in 37 A. D., the Romans inscribed his name on a shield of gold and appointed a day on which priests and senators and their noblest young men and maidens should annually carry it to the Capitol with pæans and prayers. Caligula ordered the statues of the gods replaced by statues of himself, and in the temple dedicated to him he placed a golden image of himself which by his orders was robed each day in garments similar to those he himself wore. Before this image the people fell down and worshiped.

Herod Agrippa of Judea desired to receive divine honors like the Roman emperors. Josephus says of him: "Now, when Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judea, he came to the city Cæsarea, and there he exhibited shows in honor of Cæsar, upon his being informed that there was a certain festival celebrated to make vows for his safety. At which festival a great multitude was gotten together of the principal persons and such as were of dignity through his province. On the second day of the shows, he put on a garment of silver tissue, and of a texture truly wonderful, and came into the theater, early in the morning. The silver of his garment, being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him. Presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place and another from another (though not for his good), that he was a god, and they added, 'Be thou merciful to us, for although we have hitherto reverenced thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature.' Upon this the king did neither rebuke them nor reject their impious flattery."

Ancient Greek Sacrifice

This is the Herod who sought to have his statue placed in the Holy of Holies of the temple at Jerusalem, and to whom, as you know, the people one day shouted as he sat on his throne, "the voice of a god and not of a man," and immediately an angel of the Lord smote him (Acts 12.23).

The truly Great are truly Humble. It was in an era like this, when everywhere worship was being paid to mortals, that the simple people of Lystra concluded that Paul and Barnabas were deities and sought to sacrifice to them. Do you suppose it was any temptation to Paul and Barnabas? They were Christ's witnesses, and they could accept no impious worship. They were men of like nature with these people, come only to bring them good tidings. The German word for *courage* is *Muth,* and for *humility, Demuth.* With a play upon words a German writer (Arndt) says that *Muth* is the essence of *Demuth:* Courage is the essence of Humility. The essence of Paul's humility was his courage. He was brave enough not to shrink from what he must have known would be the effect of his words, courageous enough to tell the people that their idols were vain things.

When a great Roman general returned home from his victories and was given a brilliant triumphal march through the streets of his native city, a slave walked at his side and every now and then whispered in his ear, "Remember that thou, too, art a man!" No such warning needed Paul, for he, knowing to whom his victories were always due, was ever ready to say, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Through Many Tribulations. Neither Luke, the historian of The Acts, nor the apostles themselves made much of the persecutions and hardships endured by the followers of Christ. Had he not told them that they must suffer? "Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God," said Paul on his return journey in his exhortation to the disciples in the cities he had founded.

This word *tribulations* carries in itself a rich lesson. It is derived from the Latin word *tribulum*, which means *threshing-sledge*. Underneath the threshing-sledge were sharp teeth of iron or rock, and when it was drawn over the grain by oxen these teeth bruised and broke into pieces the straw and chaff, and separated from them the wheat. As the threshing-sledge performed a good service for the wheat, so tribulations rightly borne will do much for human nature. "We rejoice in our tribulations," said Paul in his letter to the Romans, "knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope."

Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God. "We so often complain of Providence because we forget its design," says a great English preacher. "Does God rule the world to the end of making us rich, great, or happy? Were this the objective the course of the divine government would present, indeed, a series of sad blunders. But the goal of life is not personal enjoyment, social distinction, or material aggrandizement; it is a moral discipline, it designs the sanctification of our spirit, it is that we should be fit for the presence, joy and service of the holy God. Could we understand the relation of each painful event to our spiritual perfecting, we should talk less of the imperfections of his government."

The Missionary Spirit. There is no history so thrilling, so full of adventure, containing so many wonderful examples of heroism and zeal, as the history of the pioneer missionaries in heathen lands and in the wild frontier regions of our own land. Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the council at Jerusalem called the first missionaries, Paul and Barnabas; their successors have been legion.

If you have read the biography of Robert Moffat you recall that scene where the South African chief with a dozen men stood holding aloft poisoned spears, about to plunge them into his body. He had been repairing his wagon, and his wife stood by when the men came upon him. Dropping his tools and baring his breast the great missionary calmly said: "Your threats are vain. We have come to bless you, and here we stay. If you are bound to be rid of us, do what you will. But our hearts are with you and we shall stay with you till we are killed. Now spear me, if you will, and when you have slain me, others like me will come to take up the work." The spears dropped as the chief said to his men, "These missionaries are so fearless of death, they must have ten lives: there must be another life beyond." The spirit of Robert Moffat is the spirit that has animated all true-hearted missionaries. They have hazarded and spent their lives for the people among whom they have worked.

For Discussion. 1. The revelation of God in Nature. Rom. 1.18-23.

2. Not only does tribulation stand at the threshold of the Kingdom of God but on the threshold of every kingdom that it is worth your while as young men to enter.—Charles Leach.

3. The character of Paul as seen by his contemporaries. See Chapter IV of Dr. Jefferson's book, The Character of Paul.

4. Paul's methods in evangelization; meeting heathen on common ground; revisiting churches to strengthen them. The importance of making our missions self-governing and self-sustaining.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What progress up to this time has been made in making Christ known to Gentiles? 2. What does Paul say in Galatians about the conference in Jerusalem? (Gal. 2.1-18.) 3. What was Peter's argument in behalf of the Gentiles? 4. What was James's? 5. What was the decision of the Council and how did it show wisdom? 6. How should church differences be settled today?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
GOING FORWARD IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTIES

Beginning the Lesson. The Romans had many gods, and they believed that these gods sometimes came to earth in disguise. There is a beautiful fable about the gods Jupiter and Mercury coming once to the district of Phrygia, in Asia Minor.

"For harbor at a thousand doors they knocked,
Not one of all the thousand but was locked;
At last one hospitable house they found,
A homely shed; the roof, not far from ground."

This was the home of a humble couple named Baucis and Philemon, and they received the two strangers very hospitably. They did not know who the men were, but they did everything in their power to make their guests comfortable. They were rewarded by having their poor little cottage changed into a magnificent temple. When the gods asked what wish of theirs they could grant, they replied—

"We crave to serve before your sacred shrine,
And offer at your altars rites divine,"

and then they added another wish, that when the time came for them to die, they might die together. Thus it came to pass, according to the legend, that

"In Phrygian ground
Two neighboring trees, with walls encompassed round,
Stand on a moderate rise, with wonder shown,
One a hard oak, a softer linden, one;"

the two trees into which Baucis and Philemon were transformed at the same moment when "their race was run."

This story was often repeated to the children of Lystra, a city of Phrygia, and there must have been many children to whom the names of this couple were given, and to whom their parents hoped these gods would some time come. Was it any wonder that when Paul and Barnabas came to Lystra and healed a cripple that the people thought they must be these gods?

How Children are Crippled in Persia. A book entitled Glimpses of Persia tells us how some cripples are made in that land. The people are busy weaving carpets from sunrise to sunset. Many of the workers are only five, six, or seven years old. Children who sit on a seat where their feet cannot touch the floor form the habit of crossing them at the ankles, and thus they sit twelve hours daily. The bones of childhood are soft, and those children are rendered helpless cripples for life. In one factory where the children were examined, thirty-six out of thirty-eight were found crippled or deformed.

Paul's Experience at Lystra. It is dangerous to meddle with the passions of a mob. It is dangerous to call their gods vain things; it is dangerous in the midst of their superstitious emotions, when they want to worship you, to make them feel ridiculous by having mistaken you for a god. Mobs are ticklish things to handle. This crowd grows silent, grows sulky; begins to listen to the hostile Jews from Iconium. "If they are not gods, then they healed the cripple by the power of the Evil One." So when Paul tries to preach next day he can scent trouble in the air. He finds a changed atmosphere. The crowd is hostile. Soon the yelling roughs from the back lanes are jostling and crowding around him. Soon the stones are flying. He sees that there is no escape. He is hit. He is down. His eyes are closed, but his brain is forming vivid pictures of another stoning twelve years before in which he himself took part, and of a dead face that was the face of an angel. Soon a stunning blow on the head sends his pictures flying, and Barnabas is looking on another dead face, and looking out into the lonely years without his comrade. But Paul is not dead. It would take more than that to kill him while his great life work remained undone.

And here is a very interesting coincidence. Twelve years ago the young Paul had been a spectator at the stoning of Stephen, and largely as the result of that stoning the Church had gained her doughtiest champion. This day a frightened lad is spectator at the stoning of Paul—a Lystra boy living with his mother and grandmother, and largely as a result of that stoning, Paul is going to win his best fellow-worker, to be to him as a son in his old age. We hear nothing of him here, but two years afterwards in passing through this town of Lystra Paul finds young Timothy, a convert of his own. Long years afterwards, when Timothy is a bishop, Paul writes to him praising the religious influence of his mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, and he reminds him, "Remember, Timothy, what I suffered in Lystra." So you see there is little doubt that he was there at the stoning.—Dr. J. Paterson Smyth, in The Story of St. Paul's Life and Letters.

"To Suffer is to Pay for What we Have Gained." A few years ago, a young man who had left his Italian home strong, handsome and full of youthful courage, returned to Florence, changed, in less than a year's absence, to a mere wreck of

a man as far as his body is concerned. His ambition led him to undertake an exploring expedition into the almost unknown interior of Tibet, and the cruelties he experienced there at the hands of the barbarous natives are such as most of us could not endure to hear described.

It was the young explorer's extraordinary endurance of pain which saved his life. As tortures could not wring a cry from his lips, the Tibetans decided that he must be some sort of supernatural being, and so hesitated to kill him. After months, rumors of this white man, impervious to pain, reached the Indian borders. A search party immediately set out, and at last succeeded in rescuing the European, as well as some valuable maps and photographs.

After his return to Florence, blinded, mutilated, and constantly suffering intense pain, along with the certainty that death could not be far in the future, this young man was asked how he had been able to refrain from crying out under the anguish of his inhuman torture. His reply is worth putting on record: "I was too heavily laden with interesting discoveries to lose my chance of escape by an instant's relaxation of mind. To suffer is to pay for what I have gained. The price is paltry; it is nothing."

If we rise with a headache in the morning, if some accident upsets our plans for the day's enjoyment, if a great sorrow comes upon us unaware, do we accept these things bravely, as a small price to pay for the development we are to gain through their means, or do we repine and complain, and feel that God is dealing unkindly with us?

Paul, who knew what suffering was as well as any man who has lived, declared that he counted the loss of all things but a trifle, in comparison with winning Christ. His was the spirit of the young scientist of whom we have spoken, though in an infinitely higher cause. And it is not too much to ask, no matter how great the suffering through which we win likeness to our Master, that we should say from our hearts: "To suffer is to pay for what we gain. The price is paltry: it is nothing."—Hattie Lummis, in Zion's Herald.

As Brave as Paul. A missionary and his wife, who for three years had been in charge of Baraka Station on the west coast of Africa, were driven away by the chiefs, and were threatened with death if they should attempt to return. They left the mission house and farm in charge of Tom and Uriah, two converted native boys. The kindred of Uriah came in force, seized him and dragged him from the mission, and gave him his choice between renouncing Jesus and being beaten.

Uriah said, "I no give up Jesus." Then they beat him nearly to death. He kept repeating, "I no give up Jesus."

Then they took him to a small stream of water, and held his head under until the poor boy was nearly strangled; but every time he got his head above water, he said, "I no give up Jesus."

Then they tied a rope around him, ran him up into the inner cone of one of their round huts, kindled a fire underneath him, and threw on it a lot of red pepper. Poor Uriah sneezed and coughed and fainted. When they supposed that he was dead, they lowered him, and dragged him out of the hut. In the fresh air he soon opened his eyes, when his would-be murderers crowded around him, shouting, "Now you give up Jesus!"

"No, I die for Jesus. He died for me and I want to die for him."

Thinking that they could not prevail, they left him. He returned to the mission, and with Tom held the fort.—Unknown.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.—Paul.

Try, if you are to suffer, to do it splendidly.—Phillips Brooks.

Not in the clamor of the crowded street
Not in the shouts and plaudits of the throng,
But in ourselves are triumph and defeat.—Longfellow.

Not to him who rashly dares,
But to him who nobly bears,
Is the victor's garland sure.—Whittier.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Express the second sentence in your own words. 2. The tenth sentence. 3. What was the result of the council? 4. What earlier lesson of this year helps us to understand this one? 5. Why did the Pilgrim Fathers come to this land? 6. What does the Declaration of Independence say about freedom of worship?

LESSON IV—JULY 26

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

GOLDEN TEXT: We believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus. Acts 15.11

LESSON Acts 15.1-35 DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 5.1-9

REFERENCE MATERIAL Galatians 2.11-21; 5.1-26; Ephesians 2.4-22

ACTS 15 And certain men came down from Judæa and taught the brethren, *saying*, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2 And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, *the brethren* appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. 3 They therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phœnicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. 4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things that God had done with them. 5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses.

6 And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter. 7 And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them,

Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8 And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; 9 and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. TROUBLE AT ANTIOCH OF SYRIA, verse 1. As our last lesson stated, Paul reported to the church at Antioch in Syria "all things that God had done with them," and gave as the great result of their work the fact that "God had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles." When the news reached the church at Jerusalem, they found the door unto the Gentiles too wide ajar to suit them.

Until Paul took up the work, the Christian churches, like the Jewish synagogues, had been composed of Jews and proselytes, the proselytes being Gentiles who had received the Jewish rite of circumcision. In attendance at the services there were also the "God-fearing" or "devout" Gentiles, who, not having been circumcised, were not in "full fellowship" with the rest. That God was no respecter of persons Peter had learned at Joppa, and the Jerusalem church, after hearing all the circumstances in regard to the baptism of the Gentile Cornelius and his household, had glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."

The truth, however, had been applied in only a few special cases, and the far-reaching consequences to the Church had not been foreseen. Now a crisis was reached. Certain members of the Jerusalem church came to Antioch and declared that unless all were circumcised according to the custom of Moses, they could not be saved, thus insisting that Gentiles must first become proselytes before they could become Christians.

"Paul saw what they did not see—that if anything else than faith was brought in as necessary to knit men to Christ, and make them partakers of salvation, faith was deposed from its place. History has proved that anything whatever introduced as associated with faith comes to be recognized as the means of salvation. It must be faith or circumcision; it cannot be faith and circumcision. The lesson is needed today as much as in Antioch. The controversy started then is a perennial one, and the Church of the present needs Paul's exhortation, 'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

II. THE DEPUTATION TO JERUSALEM, verses 2, 3. Paul and Barnabas opposed these brethren from Judea, and after much discussion and dissension, the church of Antioch appointed Paul and Barnabas and others a committee to go to Jerusalem and discuss the question with the apostles and elders there. Escorted on their way by the church, this committee then went southward through Phœnicia

and Samaria—and there their journey was almost a demonstration, for their report of the conversion of the Gentiles produced great joy among the churches on the way.

III. THE CONFERENCE AND DECISION AT JERUSALEM, verses 4-21. When the committee arrived at Jerusalem they were honorably received by the whole church, to whom they gave an account of what had taken place in the newly-founded churches. Then certain Pharisees arose and said, "It is needful to circumcise them and to charge them to keep the law of Moses."

So great a subject, one that involved the question whether the gospel was for all the Gentiles or only for the few who should first become Jews, could not be settled at once. That Paul's account in Galatians 2.1-10 describes his visit to Jerusalem on this occasion is the usual view. From the latter, then, we learn that Titus, a Gentile convert, was with Paul and Barnabas, and that before the general council meeting there was a consultation with the Three Pillars of the church, James and Peter and John. At this smaller conference the three acknowledged Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles and gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, agreeing, we may say, to divide the mission field, Paul and Barnabas to be supreme where the Gentiles predominated, and the other apostles, among the Jews. The only thing the three asked of Paul was that the Gentile Christians should remember the poor Christians of Jerusalem. The meeting of the council followed, which ratified the earlier agreement.

The silence which followed Peter's home thrust gave Paul and Barnabas an opportunity of rehearsing the wonders wrought by God among the Gentiles. They had done this before (verse 4), but what they had said had evidently been shouted down by their opponents and had not lodged in the minds of anyone.

"Facts are stronger than theories. It was Peter's argument in the case of Cornelius: 'They have received the Holy Spirit as well as we,' 'Who was I, that I could withstand God?' It is the argument which shatters all analogous narrowing of the conditions of Christian life. If men say, 'Except ye be' this or that 'ye cannot be saved,' it is enough to point to the fruits of Christian character, and say, 'These show that the souls which bring them forth are saved, and you must widen your conceptions of the possibilities to include these actualities'" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

Peter has a reputation for rashness of speech, for saying the thing he ought not to say, but he deserves also a reputation for readiness of speech in the right cause and for saying the thing he ought to say. Here at the Council he proves it. He arose and said:

"God through me gave the gospel to the Gentiles. God makes no distinction between them and us, giving them also the witness of the Holy Spirit, and wherefore should we put a yoke upon their necks which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? Every one of us who is honest knows that he has not really obeyed the whole Mosaic law. We, like they, shall be saved, not by the rite of circumcision, but through the grace of the Lord Jesus." See The End of Jewish Christianity, Historical Background.

"We do wisely when we square our theories with facts; but many of us go to work in the opposite way, and snip down facts to the dimension of our theories."

Then James, the brother of Jesus, offered a definite proposal, which was in the nature of a compromise. "Peter has told you that God had given the gospel to the Gentiles," he said. "This has been foretold by prophecy." He turned to Amos 9.11,12, to prove that Judaism was fulfiled in Christianity. "Therefore," he declared, "my judgment is that we should not trouble those Gentiles who turn to God, but ask them only to abstain from four things: from eating food that has been polluted by first having been offered to idols, from eating meat which has not been strained from its blood, from things strangled, and from impurity. From these things they should abstain because of the feeling of the Jews who are found in every city."

You will recall that the trouble about eating was as old as the time of the Exodus. "The Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians," and therefore "they set on for Joseph by himself, and for his brothers by themselves, and for the Egyptians, that did eat with Joseph, by themselves" (Genesis 43). And it is as recent as today, for a Hindu may not eat with a Parsee or a Mohammedan.

IV. THE DEPUTATION AND LETTER TO ANTIOCH, verses 22-29. The advice of James carried the day. The whole church agreed to send two of their leading men, Judas and Silas, to Antioch with Paul to explain their decision. By these men a letter was sent which greeted the Gentiles as brethren, informed them that those from Jerusalem who had stirred up the trouble had not been acting under the authority of the church, commended Paul and Barnabas as beloved brethren who had hazarded their lives for the Lord, reported a unanimous decision, given through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that no further burden should be placed on the Gentile Christians than the abstaining from the four things enumerated by James.

"The most remarkable thing in that letter is the significant phrase, 'It seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us.' What a contrast there is between that divine endorsement and the decision of a majority! Let us only practice and teach what seems good to the Holy Spirit, and let us ask that we may be so attuned to him that what is good to him may be equally so to us" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

V. THE RECEPTION OF THE LETTER, verses 30-35. The church at Antioch well knew the strong, conservative element in the Mother-Church at Jerusalem, and the bigotry of many of its members. They must have awaited the result in much anxiety. When the committee returned and the letter was read, there was great rejoicing.

There was give and take on both sides. The church at Jerusalem had yielded in what seemed to them a most important matter, the requirement of circumcision; the church at Antioch might well yield in lesser matters, the abstaining from things strangled and food offered to idols. In a similar way may religious opponents come to one accord now.

Judas and Silas, after exhorting the church, returned to Jerusalem, but Paul and Barnabas remained with them for some time, preaching and teaching.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Under what circumstances was the Ethiopian treasurer baptized? Who was Cornelius, and what led to his baptism? How was Paul led to turn to the Gentiles in his preaching? When was Peter called to account for his liberal practices with Gentiles?

The Aftermath of the Council at Jerusalem. In a sense, the struggle was not over. In fact, this council in its history very much resembled that of Nicæa, Mr. Rackham in his Commentary on Acts points out. "The great council met in 325 after the first outbreak of Arianism, and almost unanimously adopted the creed which excluded Arianism from the faith. But this was only the beginning of the struggle. After the council the controversy grew more intense, the church was nearly torn in two, and only after fifty years of fighting was the Nicene Creed generally accepted as the faith of the Church. So now after this council the circumcision party renewed their efforts with greater zeal. St. Luke, however, is right in speaking of peace, because the struggle changed its character. The extreme party in its fanaticism became almost a separate 'sect' of 'Judaizers'; and their work was transformed into a personal attack on St. Paul. They recognized that 'the apostle of the Gentiles' was the great champion of Gentile liberty; and accordingly they dogged his footsteps, they disputed his teaching, they denied his apostolate. They sent emissaries even into his own Gentile churches to steal his converts away from him, and in many places they succeeded in stirring up scenes of strife such as had occurred at Antioch, and this with most disastrous effect in the churches of Galatia, which almost apostatized from St. Paul's gospel. We learn these facts chiefly from the letters of the third missionary journey—to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans. This last, however, written in 54, marks the turn of the tide. It was St. Paul's great vindication of his gospel; after that, we only find some last flames, as it were, flashing up in the Epistle to the Philippians, and the dying embers of the controversy in the Pastoral Epistles. But in attacking St. Paul the Judaizers were not alone. If they were zealous against Paul because of circumcision, the unbelieving Jews who would not even accept Jesus as the Messiah must have been infuriated at his preaching to the Gentiles. Accordingly, as we shall see, they pursued him with a relentless hatred. This controversy with the Jews altogether eclipsed in magnitude that with the Judaizers; and of the latter St. Luke tells us no more.

Indeed, he had no reason to break silence. The controversy was personally most painful to St. Paul; but in the council at Jerusalem the church had definitely decided against the Judaizing party and the truth must prevail. The rapid growth of the Gentile churches of itself caused the controversy to die out, and there was no need to rake up the embers."

The End of Jewish Christianity. In the year 70 Jerusalem was taken by Titus, the temple burned, and the city, excepting a few towers and parts of the walls, razed to the ground. Some years before this James, the Christian leader, had been put to death, on charges which are obscure to us, by the Sadducean authorities. Not long after that the usual conditions of turbulence in Palestine were greatly aggravated; Jerusalem soon became a horrible scene of bloody partisan strife and mob violence; and at last the Christians—how many in number we know not—withdrew from the Holy City, fled across the Jordan, and took up their residence in the Gentile town of Pella. Without a center, without any important general organization, without any great leader, Jewish Christianity as a distinctive power in the Christian Church came to an end. There continued to be Christians in Palestine. Some of these, like Hegesippus in the second century, entered wholly into sympathy with general church thought. Others maintained their natural character and were more or less known to Christian writers as Nazarene or Ebionite Christians. Cut off from the main Church, and treated as heretics, they gradually disappear from view. It seems almost like irony when about 150 A. D., eighty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, Justin Martyr actually apologizes for his own liberality in holding that some Christians who observe the institutions of Judaism can be saved. It marks the complete reduction of specific Jewish Christianity to the position of a half-tolerated sect.—James Hardy Ropes, in The Apostolic Age.

For the Blackboard. The Council in Jerusalem. Acts 15.1-35.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene is first at Antioch in Syria. The delegates, Paul and Barnabas and the others, were escorted on their way by other Christians, perhaps as far as Seleucia on the coast. As Galilee is not mentioned, they probably went southward along the coast, passing through the cities of Sidon and Tyre and on to Ptolemais, and then crossed the Plain of Esdraelon into Samaria, whence they turned southward to Jerusalem.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

How tactful is the letter which the Council at Jerusalem sent to the people at Antioch! Under the circumstances many things might have been said that would have aroused antagonism. The letter avoids all this, and yet says all that is essential. It disclaims authorizing those who had "subverted souls," and it gives Paul and Barnabas due meed of praise. "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than"—how infinitely better is such a statement than words to the effect that we demand of you thus and so! Surely Paul had a hand in the wording of this letter, for again and again we see how tactful he was in dealing with others. Notice how often when compelled to reprove he begins by saying all that he can to cheer and encourage.

Epictetus has excellent advice along this line. "Every matter hath two handles: by the one it may be carried; by the other, not. If thy brother do thee wrong, take not this thing by the handle, He wrongs me; for that is the handle whereby it may not be carried. But take it rather by the handle, He is my brother, nourished with me; and thou wilt take it by a handle whereby it may be carried."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
WHAT IS CHRISTIAN LIBERTY?

Beginning the Lesson. The things that God had done through Paul, which he rehearsed to the church at Jerusalem, were wonderful, but just as wonderful was the thing which God had done in Paul himself. He, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, trained in all the strictest laws of his nation, had become the most liberal of all the Jews; his mission was to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles, and he was immovable in his determination to champion the cause of the Gentiles against all attacks.

For the stand taken by the church at Jerusalem in regard to the Gentiles there is much to be said. The rite of circumcision had been observed since the days of Abraham, and no law from God or from Jesus the Christ had been voiced abrogating it. Jesus had proclaimed: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy but to fulfill." Who, then, had authority to declare the rite unnecessary? To Peter had come a vision, and as a result the Gentile Cornelius and his household had been received into the church at Cæsarea, but the lesson had been quickly forgotten. What right had Paul to adopt his revolutionizing procedure and say that "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing"?

Paul had the right of a revelation from God, a revelation shown, not by vision or by word of prophet, but by results that proved God's will and purpose. God who knoweth the heart, had borne the Gentiles witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto the Jews; and he had made no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, cleasing their hearts by faith. God's will is shown in his ways with men as well as through his words to men. "Truth grafts itself on previous truth, modifying it in the process, just as idiom grafts itself on previous idiom, and law on previous law," says a great psychologist. On the truth as revealed to the nation of Israel is now grafted the truth as revealed to the Gentile nations, and in the process the new truth has modified the old.

Follow with The Text Explained.

A Wise Settlement of a Disputed Question. Feeling was intense at the Council in Jerusalem. The believers who were Pharisees saw the revolutionary tendency of Paul's free gospel, honestly believed that all the Mosaic law must be lived up to, and felt that they were defending the faith of their fathers. Paul and his party knew that the peaceful course of their work was at stake, believed that Jewish rites were not necessary for salvation, and were firm in their determination to stand by a principle which meant so much in their work for God. There was free expression of thought, but there was none of bitterness of feeling. The main point at issue was decided on its merits. The conditions imposed rendered it possible for Jews and Gentiles to live together in harmony, and were a concession to the Jews, for there was "give and take" on both sides of the controversy, and the concession as to food was a reasonable one for the time being. Would that disputed questions in churches today were discussed and settled as wisely as this one of the early Church!

Christian Controversy. The whole history of the Church is a record of strife—and strife among brethren, rival factions, rival doctrines, rival systems of government. It is useless to recall the dead and buried controversies of the past centuries, but every student of Church history knows that not an item of the creed was accepted by the Church without the fiercest quarrels and the keenest discussions—sometimes even to the drawing of the sword and the shedding of blood.

We have among ourselves evidences enough that violent strife and disputation can be caused by religion. Christian churches are divided on points of doctrine, and points of worship, and points of government; and even within the same church, as in the Church of England today, there are parties arrayed against each other about ritual, and even about the sacrament of the Lord's Supper itself, which is the one thing which ought to unite all Christians. Many of our churches were born in the throes of conflict, and cradled in controversy. Men, following truth, constrained to speak truth, have had to live at variance with brethren whom they respected, but with whom they could not agree.

Lord Rosebery in a very beautiful speech at Epsom referred to a controversy in the English Church at the time, about incense and lights in worship, and said: "Theological discussions are, for some reason unknown to the layman, conducted with more asperity than any other form of discussion. Why that should be so, why the gospel that came to preach peace and goodwill in this world should be so often the means of provoking the most violent disputations, is a problem I confess I am unable to solve."—Condensed from The Gift of Influence, by Dr. Hugh Black.

Pressure toward Unity Today. You remember with what words Nelson healed the quarrel between Admiral Collingwood and his captain on the morning of Trafalgar. Collingwood went to receive instructions, and Nelson inquired where his captain was. He was told that "We are not on good terms with each other." "Terms!" cried Nelson, "good terms with each other!" And he sent for Captain Rotheram, and led him up to Collingwood. He said: "Look! yonder are the enemy," and bade them shake hands like Englishmen.

Ah, look! Yonder are the enemy! Yonder is possible victory! We ought to be

able to draw nearer to one another. Dare we still plant new churches side by side in limited parishes? I believe we dare not. Dare we maintain our churches side by side in districts with dwindling populations? I trow not. The pressure from heathendom will forbid it. The problem before us is to develop the great church idea, and to limit, wholesomely, the purely denominational ideal.—R. C. Gillie.

Christian Liberty on the Mission Field. Five years ago the International Convention of Disciples of Christ voted to instruct the Executive Committee of the United Christian Missionary Society to inquire into the faith and practice of certain missionaries. Those who would not declare themselves loyal to the faith and practice of American Disciples of Christ were told that they should resign.

The next year the China Mission sent to the Convention one of the missionaries under attack. He was questioned before several committees and finally before the Convention. He endeavored to be conciliatory, but at times, like Paul before the self-appointed committee from Judea at Antioch and then before the Council at Jerusalem, he stood at bay. He declared that the Chinese churches were in duty bound to be faithful to the principles of New Testament religion, not to the practice of the Disciples of Christ in America. When asked to promise that in the future the missionaries would not receive into full membership unimmersed Christians from other missions he refused, although he said this had seldom been done in the past.

The question was debated for several days in the Convention, and then it was voted to let the missionaries have their freedom.

Truth Outgrows Old Forms of Expression. In this world of ours all our spiritual truths, all our eternal realities, have to be expressed in temporal, human, changing forms. There have been stagnant centuries which have kept unchanged the crystallized forms which they inherited, and they have supposed that faith would cease to be if this particular form of truth should vanish away. The Pharisee could not imagine a true religion without circumcision and the blood of bulls and goats; the Roman Catholic of the fifteenth century could not believe that real religion would survive if the doctrine of transubstantiation—the real presence in the bread and wine—should be given up. The Calvinist supposed that his articles of faith were a permanent embodiment of truth and his plan of salvation the only possible one.

They all conceived of truth as something which could be expressed once for all in a form which all coming ages must keep unchanged. As well might we expect to bottle up the daylight to preserve it. Truth is never some dead thing which can be "laid out"; it is living, moving, quickening, outgrowing its old forms, taking on new expressions and preserving itself, as life does, by endless variations and by infinite embodiments.

There are transitions going on in every age. The things that can be shaken are removed, and the things that have waxed old vanish away. These things always bring trial to faith, for it is difficult for most persons to distinguish between the temporary form—i.e., the human embodiment—and the eternal and abiding truth which lives on in the midst of change and vanishing forms.

Here comes the great test of spiritual power and insight. Those who have "short vision" and a traditional faith build on the temporal, and cling to the form which has grown familiar and dear to them, but if anything shakes this their faith is shattered, and they suffer shipwreck. Those, however, who have real spiritual vision look through the temporal and fleeting, through the transitory forms and embodiments, and settle their hearts and their faith upon the eternal reality—the Infinite Self who abides and works through all changes.—Dr. Rufus M. Jones, in Practical Christianity.

We Believe that we Shall be Saved through the Grace of the Lord Jesus, in Like Manner as They. This statement coming from the lips of Peter was a wonderful pronouncement. Holding that belief, as Christians do, many have zealously sought to convert the Jews of today to this belief, but evangelistic propaganda here has failed. And yet the fact remains, as The Christian Century points out, that thousands of them are finding their way into Christian churches.

"Most metropolitan ministers know of Jewish members of their churches and of Jewish children in the Sunday-schools. From these ministers certain facts may be ascertained having a bearing upon the possible gradual absorption of Judaism into Christianity. Not ten per cent of the Jews are any longer connected with synagogues in large cities. In some smaller cities there are hundreds of Jews and no synagogue at all. Since men do not live long without religion, these 'unchurched' Jews are finding new altars. Many of them have gone into Christian Science, for

there the offensive symbol of the cross is entirely removed, with no reminders of it either in baptism or the Lord's supper. Jews now intermarry with Christians, and these mixed marriages nearly always result in a Christian program for the education of the children. A Jewish parent who is anxious to break through the social stigma of race, sends his children to Sunday-school. Few of the adults will ever be Christians, but in many cases the children will. Whenever the church goes out consciously to 'evangelize' the Jew, it meets failure or meagre success. When the church treats the Jew democratically as just one of the many sons of God, the middle wall of partition is broken down."

For Discussion. 1. The passing of Jewish Christianity. See Chapter VII of Ramsay's Paul the Traveler.

2. The Jews of the first century eschew the Gentiles, but we of the twentieth century eschew the Jews. They were wrong and so are we.—Dr. George W. McDaniel.

3. "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity." See chapter VIII of The Character of Jesus, by Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

4. Paul's sympathy. See chapter XVIII of Dr. Jefferson's book.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. According to tradition, who was the writer of the Epistle of James? 2. Why was James not a disciple during the lifetime of Jesus his brother? 3. Explain verse 21. 4. Verses 23-25. 5. Verse 26. 6. Verse 27. 7. What was Jesus's mission on earth, as he once read it from the prophet Isaiah? 8. How does James interpret religion? 9. What is the difference between religion and theology?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

Beginning the Lesson. Three hundred years ago James I was King of England. He claimed that he ruled "by divine right," that his word was law, and his people had no rights that he needed to respect unless he wished. Among his people were some who did not like all the forms and ceremonies of the Church in England, the Established Church, as it is called. King James would not allow them to form a separate church, where they could elect their own minister and manage their own affairs, and when they tried to do this some of them were put in prison. They escaped to Holland, where they could worship as they pleased. But they did not wish their children to become Dutch, and in 1620 these Pilgrims sailed in the Mayflower for America, and landed at Plymouth.

"They have left unstained what there they found—
Freedom to worship God."

The Jews of Judea even after they became Christians insisted that all who would be Christians must keep all their Jewish forms and ceremonies. Like King James of England they felt that to them had been given the divine right to say what should be done in all religious questions. They found that beyond Judea Paul had been establishing churches where Gentiles were received as members. These Gentiles would not adopt all their Jewish ceremonies. Paul said they need not. The church at Jerusalem said they must. Our lesson tells us how the question was raised and settled. See The Text Explained.

It Seemed Good to the Holy Spirit and to Us. In the letter written by the Council at Jerusalem to the church at Antioch, the decision in regard to mooted questions between Jews and Gentiles is declared to be the will of the Holy Spirit as well as of the "Mother Church." How had they arrived at this decision? They had met in council and discussed the question; arguments for and against had been raised and weighed; they had used their minds as though all depended on them alone; they had doubtless sought in prayer to know God's will, and they believed that the Holy Spirit was guiding their judgment even as Christ had promised. Had he not said, When the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth?

It sometimes seems as though Paul and Barnabas and the other great leaders in the early Church were guided by God in a peculiar way, that to them was given the power to know God's will as it is not given to men in these days. But those great men were guided by God's voice within. There is in every one a conscience which tells him what he ought to do, and this *ought* is God's will for him. If he heeds the promptings of this indwelling Spirit, he, too, can say that his decision "seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to him."

God has revealed his will in his Word. The Bible records God's dealings with his chosen people in countless experiences of life; it is full of principles for right conduct rather than of specific rules, and these principles are our guide to his will for us now. Especially has he revealed his will through the life and teachings of his Son. If we have made these teachings ours, our minds will act in accord with them, and our decisions will thus be in harmony with God's purposes.

Paul Thorwaldsen

How to Regard Those who Do not Believe as We Do. When Sir Robert Hart was a student at Belfast a professor had a packing-case brought into the class-room and directed his students to describe what they saw. It seemed a very simple thing to do; surely every one would say the same thing about it, he thought. Yet the man on the right described an address written in black letters; the one at the end dwelt on the iron hoops that bound the box; a third was interested in the long nails that studded a corner. Thus each, according to his viewpoint, saw that same commonplace packing-box in a different manner.

After this practical demonstration, Sir Robert tells us, he never in his life could grow impatient with anyone who did not see exactly what he saw when they were standing on opposite sides of a question.

The Spirit of Contention. President Cleveland used to tell of an old colored preacher who came every day to his hotel with his Bible under his arm and this challenge in his mouth: "Mornin', gen'enmen, mornin'. I'se come ovah dis mornin' to see if anybody wants to 'spute on de Holy Scriptahs." The love of "'sputing" grows with slight encouragement.

Controversy is all right when in the right spirit and when truth and right are at stake; but why fall out with the other boys or girls over a thing that has not a shadow of importance? The observation of the rugged farmer, when a neighbor endeavored to get up an angry controversy over the question as to whether a hen did most damage in the garden with her bill or feet, is pertinent. Said he: "Neighbor, if the truth of history depended on gettin' this thing right—if the gov'ment would be affected by our verdict—I'd argy the p'int right along. Let's cool off an' stay friends."—The Westminster Teacher.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. For freedom did Christ set us free.—Paul.

"A little explained, a little endured, a little passed over, and the quarrel is ended."

The larger nature will ever be the first to make overtures of reconciliation.—William George Jordan.

> Behold, how good and how pleasant it is,
> For brethren to dwell together in unity!—Psalms.

Sometimes we win our great victories just by giving in.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does it mean to be a doer of the word? 2. How may we be doers of the word? 3. Jesus concluded his Sermon on the Mount with an illustration of what a hearer who is not a doer is like: what was it? (Mt. 7.24-27). 4. What does James say is the religion that God approves? 5. Commit to memory verses 19, 22, 26 and 27.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

GOLDEN TEXT: Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only. James 1.22

LESSON The Book of James DEVOTIONAL READING James 1.12-18

JAMES 1.19 But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 20 for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. 21 Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. 23 For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man holding his natural face in a mirror: 24 for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But he that looketh into the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and *so* continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing. 26 If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain. 27 Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. PUT AWAY ANGER, verses 19, 20. The author of this Epistle believes that members of the Christian Church should be "living epistles," exemplars of the Christian virtues. "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath," he counsels.

"Three things are here required; keenness in listening, deliberation in speaking, control of feeling. We are to be very alert in the first, but the second and the third are to be held firmly in leash. It is the way of the Master, and it will be found the way of life. O Lord my God, give me the listening ear. Let me miss nothing of all thy counsels. Give me a wise control of speech; let not my words be the servant of mischief" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

For human anger does not promote righteousness, continues James. James is said to have been known as James the Righteous, an appropriate designation; for his whole Epistle is a treatise upon righteousness.

"Man's wrath is rarely, if ever, justifiable; even 'just indignation' is too often intermixed with other elements; and frequently the premises on which it is founded are at fault. Man, unlike God, never knows all the circumstances of the case" (W. E. Oesterly).

"The worst thing we can bring to a religious controversy is anger. This, however it may pretend to be raised by a concern for what is just and right, is not to be trusted. Wrath is a human thing, and the wrath of man stands opposed to the righteousness of God. Those who pretend to serve the cause of God hereby show that they are acquainted neither with God nor his cause" (Matthew Henry).

II. HOW TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD, verse 21. The much-speaking of the Jews often ended in evil-speaking, as some one has observed, and James now counsels his readers, in the words of Moffatt's translation, "Clear away all the foul, rank growth of malice and make a soil of modesty for the Word which roots itself inwardly with power to save souls." "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," writes Paul in Romans.

Matthew Henry draws two lessons from the first part of this verse: first, sin is a defiling thing, it is called filthiness itself; and, second, there is abundance of that which is evil in us to be watched against—there is a superfluity of naughtiness.

"We must yield ourselves to the Word of God, with most submissive, humble, and tractable tempers: this is to receive it with meekness, being willing to hear of our faults, and taking it not only patiently, but thoughtfully, desiring also to be molded and formed by the doctrines and precepts of the gospel" (Matthew Henry).

III. WHAT IS TO BE DONE AFTER HEARING THE WORD OF GOD, verses 22-25. You delude, deceive yourselves, in thinking that hearing alone is suffi-

cient: it must be followed by doing to be useful. Knowledge must be translated into conduct and character.

Hearing is for the sake of doing. James of Harvard agrees with James of Jerusalem: but expresses the thought in this way: "The current of life which runs in at our eyes or ears is meant to run out at our hands, feet or lips. The only use of the thoughts it occasions while inside is to determine its direction to whichever of these organs shall on the whole under the circumstances actually present, act in the way most propitious to our welfare."

This antithesis of hearing and doing is found in the Talmud. Our Commentary quotes the following: "All my days I have grown up amongst the wise, and have not found aught good for a man but silence; not learning but doing is the groundwork; and whoso multiplies words occasions sin." "Whosesoever works are in excess of his wisdom, his wisdom stands, and whosesoever wisdom is in excess of his works, his wisdom stands not."

A mere hearer who is not also a doer, Paul compares to a man who glances in a mirror at the face which nature gave him and then goes away and immediately forgets how he looks. The mirrors of James's day were of polished metal—silver, copper, or tin—and the reflected images were far less clear than in our modern mirrors. But in any mirror the image is fleeting. The mirror does not fix and retain it. Unless a hearer fixes and transforms the words he hears into deeds, they have for him only a fleeting value.

"How many are there who, when they sit under the Word, are affected with their own sinfulness, misery, and danger, acknowledging the evil of sin, their need of Christ; but, when the hearing is over, all is forgotten, convictions are lost, good affections vanish and pass away like the waters of a land-flood: they straightway forget" (Matthew Henry).

On the other hand, a man remembers the ideal of Christian manhood which he sees in the perfect law in whose observance he feels himself free, and he strives to realize it in his works. Moffatt translates the verse thus: "Whereas he who gazes into the faultless law of freedom and remains in that position, proving himself to be no forgetful listener but an active agent, he will be blessed in his activity." Was not this the text which actuated Calvin and Roosevelt?

The Greek word translated "beholdeth" in verse 24 does not imply prolonged attention, whereas the Greek word for "looketh" in verse 25 is the same one used of the earnest gaze of Peter and Mary at the sepulcher, Jn. 20.5,11. It involves, Dr. Oesterly says, the ideal of eagerness and concentration; and he considers it a most appropriate term "for a man poring over a roll of the Torah."

"That is a picture which would come home to the Jew! It ought also to come home to all who love their Bibles. Do we 'pore over' the Holy Book with eager and concentrated gaze—not only of eyes that read the letter, but of Spirit-taught conscience—apprehending the inner message as it flashes forth from that reflection, the flaws and inconsistencies that reveal only too plainly when we have been hearers and no more?" (W. S. Hooton).

"To print the image of the Ideal on our souls we must 'look right down into' it, and 'Stay by' it, so as to transform the momentary hearing into permanent working. The Law that is Liberty is called 'perfect' or 'mature' because it works by the complete coincidence of man's will with God's—'Our wills are ours to make them thine' " (A. S. Peake).

This man shall be blessed in his doing, declares James. Note that he does not affirm that a man shall prosper because of good deeds, but that blessedness will come to him in the doing; as Christ himself said, If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.

"It is not talking, but walking," says Matthew Henry, "that will bring us to heaven."

IV. A VAIN RELIGION, verse 26. He who *seems* religious—because of his religious observances, such as almsgiving, prayer, attendance at worship—yet does not have his tongue under control, that man deceives himself, his religion is vain, futile, valueless. Matthew Henry reminds us that there is such quick intercourse between the tongue and the heart that the one may be known by the other. "There is no strength nor power in that religion which will not enable a man to bridle his tongue."

"Great and hot disputes there are in the world about this matter—what

religion is false and vain, and what is true and pure. I wish men would agree to let the Holy Scripture in this place determine the question; and here it is plainly and peremptorily declared" (Matthew Henry).

V. A TRUE RELIGION, verse 27. What is better than external acts of worship is kindly conduct, such as visiting widows and the fatherless in their trouble (for love is the fulfilling of the law), and purity of heart (for they that are pure in heart shall see God): this is the religion that is acceptable to God our Father.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What fate did James the brother of John meet? What part did James the brother of Jesus have in the settling of the difficulty at the Council of Jerusalem?

The Author of the Epistle of James. There are three prominent men in the New Testament by the name of James: James the son of Zebedee and brother of John, who was put to death by Herod about 44 A. D. (Acts 12.2); James the son of Alphæus, called James the Less in Mt. 15.40, another apostle; and James the brother of Jesus (Mt. 13.55), who according to very early tradition was the bishop of the Christian church at Jerusalem and the writer of the Epistle of James. Josephus says that this last mentioned James was stoned to death as a "breaker of the law," i.e., a Christian, in 63 A. D. Although by many the author of the Epistle of James is believed to have been the apostle who was the son of Alpheus, we follow here the traditional view.

In our last lesson James appeared as a man with a warm heart but a cool head, and as such he is seen in his Epistle.

The Occasion for the Epistle of James. A writer in the Expository Times calls our attention to the fact that once we get past the greeting it is difficult to see how one can call it a letter at all, and there is no ending. Evidently James was not a letter writer. Look at it as a collection of sermonettes, or sermon notes, and you feel at once that you are sitting in the synagogue and hearing the very tones in which he addressed his hearers. Then this writer imagines this to have been the situation: Paul's Letters were getting to be widely known, and some one suggested to James—it may have been Paul himself—that a letter from him would be much appreciated by the Jewish Christians of the Dispersion. James agreed; but what better had he to say than that which he had been saying in the synagogues? And so we have bits out of his addresses, some to the Jews, some to Christians: on trials, on temptations and sin, on hearing and doing, on respect of persons and the royal law, on belief and conduct, on the many subjects he had recently been preaching about.

The Character of the Epistle. The Epistle is ethical and practical through and through. Professor Moulton calls it "a miscellany of Wisdom Literature." Its resemblance in sentiment and expression to the Sermon on the Mount is often remarked. While one purpose animates the whole—the stressing of right living—there is little connection between the sections.

"The soul of religion," John Bunyan said, "is the practick part." That is the chief lesson of the Epistle of James.

"The first chapter is one of the most extraordinary instances in literature of the use of analogy, figures of speech, and accurate observation," writes Professor Francis G. Peabody. "It heaps one illustration upon another and leaps from one picture to another, as though all nature and life were created to enrich language and teach lessons. Here are some of its hastily passing pictures, all occurring in twenty-seven verses: the surging sea, the scorching wind, the flower in the grass, the process of birth, the passing shadow, the grafted branch, the glance in the mirror, the untamed tongue."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

One morning I visited a man teaching older boys. His religion is a religion of deeds. Christianity is to him a synonym of things to be done. He stirs their souls, and awakens desire for heroic battle against evil. There are no dull moments in his class. He is a man who knows men and he interests, holds, and influences these boys—always for good.

In that very same school is another man teaching the early twenties. He believes that religion means a life of faith and prayer. He studies his Bible daily and knows it. He does not know men. He is gentle, strong, beautiful in character. He is a

good friend whom they trust. He does not stir them to action; he leaves some of them introspective to a dangerous degree. But they admire his faith, and they want it; and the consciousness that he prays for them has meant steadying power in many an hour of temptation. If only these two men could give out of his storehouse each to the other!

The man of deeds must learn to pray, else his deeds, lacking spiritual dynamic, will be but panaceas of the moment. The man of prayer needs to believe in action; to catch the spirit of the militant; else his praying, growing self-centered and critical, will strangle his spirit. The balanced teacher knows his Bible and about the Bible; knows about prayer, and prays; has faith and puts it into hard, active, testing practice.—Miss Margaret Slattery, in The Church School.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
RELIGION ACCORDING TO JAMES

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with a discussion of the Epistle of James. See The Historical Background.

The Church Today Needs a Supply of Jameses. The "James" quality, of course, is not the "Paul" quality. Paul is the man of genius, with the flaming heart, the inspired brain, the titanic energy that laughs at impossibilities and says, "It shall be done." To Paul is given the mission of extending the Kingdom of Light into the regions of darkness. He is the warrior-spirit of the Church, exulting in difficulties to be overcome, reckless of whatever opposition he may encounter in the discharge of his mission. One Paul in an age is as much as an age has to expect, and ages may pass without the appearance of even one Paul. A James, however, is essential to every church if it is to be kept together; if its resources are to be exploited, husbanded and skilfully applied to the best advantage.

The religious history of England shows that John Wesley managed to combine the qualities alike of a Paul and a James. He went through the three Kingdoms, as Mr. Birrell has put it, carrying on for more than forty years a campaign for Christ with the energy that a Parliamentary candidate puts into a contested election in the strenuous three weeks before polling day. But John Wesley also brought the James in him into full play; he devised a constitution for his Church, he "looked into the future far as human eye could see," and by the organization he devised, the method of culturing the spiritual life of the members, the method of training and employing ministers, the method of meeting the finances of the Church he placed his Church on the sure foundation that has made Methodism throughout the world the force that it is today.

Scotland has had its Jameses in such men as Chalmers and the late Dr. Rainy. These men of Scotch blood and Presbyterian training gave their shrewd practical wisdom, their understanding of Scottish character, their belief in the Presbyterian way of doing things, to the Church of their day. Great problems, spiritual and financial, came up for settlement. These men were not so spiritual that they regarded the business side of church life as of little account. They saw, and it were well if all the churches came to see, that the business of the Kingdom of God should be carried on not with less, but if possible with more business aptitude and energy than even the secular business of this world.

It does not follow, however, that a church splendidly organized and well financed is necessarily successful as a spiritual institution. The James of the Jerusalem Council and the Epistle clearly recognized this. The Church is more than an organization—an institution—it is a Society of Saved Men and Women, and the Church as a Church is strong only as these men and women are saved by faith and show in works the fruit of their faith.

The Jameses that the Churches need are the Jameses who are always seeking wisdom from the God who never denies it to those who ask, and who see in the Church never the end, but only the means to the realization of the ideal of the Kingdom of God.—The Editor of The Christian World.

We Must Listen to the Word with Purpose. When we hear the Word, but do not do it, there has been a defect in our hearing. We may listen to the Word for mere entertainment. Or we may attach a virtue to the mere act of listening to the Word. We may assume that some magical efficacy belongs to the mere reading of the Word. And all this is perverse and delusive. No listening is healthy which is not mentally referred to obedience. We are to listen with a view to obedience, with our eyes upon the very road where the obedient feet will travel. That is to say,

we are to listen with purpose, as though we were ambassadors receiving instructions from the King concerning some momentous mission. Yes, we must listen with an eye on the road.—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in My Daily Meditation.

How Dan Crawford Expresses the Thought of James. Now is the time to produce your Christianity and live the life, instead of merely talking the talk. Doctrine apart from the deed done is nothing but the skin of truth set up and stuffed. And just as a text taken from its context is a mere pretext, so mere lip-religion that is not life-religion is only a splendid nullity of speculation, nothing more.

The Angry Word. "Many years ago, when I was a small boy," a gentleman said recently, "a Mr. Gorton was pastor of our church—a godly and gifted man, for whom I grew to have an admiration that almost amounted to idolatry. Mr. Gorton seemed to be something above a common man, more like Moses and Paul and the other holy personages we read of in the Bible.

"One crisp, starlit winter night I went to the back door of the parsonage with a basket of dishes. There was to be a donation party the next evening, and father had sent me from the horse sheds with the basket while he did some errands at the store. As the girl took the dishes at the door, I heard Mr. Gorton's voice raised in high, angry tones, and I turned away quickly, forgetting the message that was to go with the basket. If Mr. Gorton used any unseemly language, I did not hear it, but the mere fact that he was angry like ordinary men, shocked me. I ran all the way to the sheds with the unreasoning fear that the minister might follow me to ask about the dishes, and thus be shamed and humiliated by knowing that I had overheard his burst of ill-temper. It was weeks before I could look Mr. Gorton in the face, and I think I never again heard him preach or pray without seeming to hear those high-pitched tones of anger.

"Of course in my boyish idealism I expected too much. The best and godliest of men have their faults; but the impressions made upon my mind by that incident have never been effaced. It has made me more careful not to say or do anything that might seem to others inconsistent with a Christian profession. If the New Testament means what it says, we make a high claim for ourselves when we stand before the world as loyal disciples of Jesus Christ. We sometimes resent criticism, but do our critics really demand any more of us than our loyalty to Christ demands? And is there not a grave danger of wounding the idealism of some one who takes the teaching of the gospel at its face value?"—Condensed from The Youth's Companion.

Keeping Ourselves Unspotted from the World. There is a little flower perfectly white, like a snowdrop, which flourishes in the coal districts of England, even at the very mouth of the shaft. In spite of the grime and dirt of such an environment it retains its purity, because it is furnished by Nature with an enamel-like surface, which does not allow the coal-dust to settle upon its petals. And this is one of Nature's parables of the grace of God. It is possible to live an unspotted life, even in the most difficult and unhelpful surroundings, just because God's power answers to the resolute desire and surrender of the heart.

Let us try to realize what this unspotted life really means. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart"—that is, the unspotted; and centuries before the Psalmist had said the same thing, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart"—that is, he that is unspotted. Thus unspottedness is a necessary condition of life-giving vision. A clean heart produces a clear eye. The unspotted man whose conscience is void of offence toward God is not afraid to face him in the strengthening solitudes of daily communion, and thus purity means power.

It is said of the Lord himself that he was "a Lamb without spot," and thus pure religion is a daily approximation to his likeness and character, and a daily increasing correspondence of the servants to their Master. Indeed I may paraphase the text thus: "Pure religion is to be like Jesus, and to be more like Jesus, and to be more like Jesus still." The practical consideration is as to whether your religion is of this sort, and, if not, as to whether you will have it, cost what it may.—Condensed from Redeeming Vision, by J. Stuart Holden.

Making One's Self Aseptic. Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock was invited to attend a notable banquet on a Saturday evening, but declined the invitation. Being pressed for a reason for declining, he replied in words that might well be pondered seriously not only by ministers, to whom they apply most directly, but by every Christian worker as well. He said, in substance:

"When a surgeon is about to perform an operation he is at particular pains to make himself aseptic, that he may carry no foreign substance, no poisonous matter of any kind to his patient. On Sunday I am to preach the Word; I am a physician and surgeon of souls. I must do all that I can to keep myself absolutely aseptic. I must not allow even the possibility of carrying to those to whom I minister anything that might vitiate my ministry or lessen its beneficial effect."

For this reason he was accustomed to set apart Saturday evening as a preliminary preparation for his Sunday services. This is but another way of putting the Apostle's thought of keeping one's self "unspotted from the world," but it is a very significant and suggestive phrasing of a great truth. It is one that is greatly needed. Saturday night spoils many a Sunday morning sermon (or lesson).—The Watchman Examiner.

Religion According to James. Religion according to James is not to believe in all the principles embodied in the Westminster Confession of Faith, or the Thirty-nine Articles of the Episcopal Church, or the Twenty-five Articles of the Methodist Church, or the nine Articles of the Evangelical Alliance, or the Decrees of the Council of Trent, or the Nicene or Apostles' Creeds. It is to receive the implanted Word, and to be doers of it.

For Discussion. 1. Can the cause of God be furthered by angry discussion? Men ostensibly afire with zeal for God and his truth may be swayed by petty motives, or be at fault in judgment, and in giving way to anger can do much. James seems to say, Be not too ready to settle everything by your own dogmatic assertions: desire rather to hear and learn—be swift to hear, slow to speak.

2. Deluding one's self as to one's Christianity. Recall the well-known answer of a small boy to the question as to whether his father were a Christian—"Yes, he is a Christian, but he hasn't worked at it much lately."

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Was Paul right in refusing to again try a quitter? 2. Was Barnabas right in standing up for Mark? 3. How did Mark turn out? 4. To what do "the decrees" of 16.4 refer?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
DOERS OF THE WORD

Beginning the Lesson. A farmer in Scotland found that his fine field of clover was being eaten off by some animal. No stray cow was ever seen there, and yet the clover was slowly disappearing. One Sunday morning he arose before daybreak and went out to his field; and there saw his neighbor's cow busily feeding. Around her neck a very long rope was fastened, and on his own doorstep sat her owner, holding in one hand the end of the rope and in the other an open Bible in which he was reading.

"Are ye trying to make them square, Tammas?" asked the farmer, as he pointed to the rope and the Book.

What words of James does this incident illustrate?

How to Recognize People. Sometimes we know people by the way they walk, and even when they are a long way off we can recognize them easily. Sometimes we know them by the clothes they wear. Sometimes we know them by the tone of their voice, although they are not visible to us. Sometimes we know them by the things they say and by the words they use. And sometimes we know them by the things they do.

What a boy does, tells us what he is. Always? Well, not always, perhaps. Because you know some boys and girls are very kind and thoughtful when they are visitors or when they are away from home, but all very different when they are alone at home. But whatever outsiders think about them, the people at home know them, and they are known by their doings.

It matters tremendously what you do. It matters to your father and mother, for they want you to be a credit to them. It matters to yourself, because if you do right now you are more likely to do right when you are older. The habits that you form now will go with you when you grow up into men and women, and so it is very important for your own sake that you should learn to do well when you are young. And you know what they said about Christ when he was on earth. They said, "He went about doing good," not just thinking about it, or speaking about it, but *doing* it. And he expects us to do the same.—Condensed from The Expository Times.

Hearers and Doers. There is a story told in Matthew's Gospel about people

who used to go to church regularly and make a great show of religion, but when they presented themselves at Heaven's gate, there was no admittance for them; Christ said he did not even know them. Who were they? They were people who had week by week heard God's will but never done it.

On the other hand, I read in another chapter about a number of people coming up to heaven's gate and being saluted in this way: "Come, ye blessed of my Father: enter into the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Who were these people? Well, they were people who had tried to do God's will every day, people who had visited the sick, clothed the naked, and fed the hungry, and done all the good they could—in a sentence, they were doers of the Word. So that the old proverb is true in Heaven as on earth, "Handsome is that handsome does."

It is nice to have a pleasant face, and I know some people who get inordinately proud of their good looks, and they spend any amount of time before the mirror admiring their own selves. But a beautiful face is not given to every one. Do what we will, some of us will be plain, not to say ugly, all our days. But there is something infinitely better than a beautiful face, and that is a beautiful soul; there is something infinitely better than a pretty figure, and that is a gracious and kindly character; there is something infinitely better worth the having than the admiration of men, and that is the "Well done!" of God. This heavenly beauty is within the reach of every one of us—yes, the plainest of us can become beautiful in God's sight by just being kind and gentle, and obedient, and thoughtful, and useful. For it is not beautiful appearance that God cares about, but beautiful deeds.

It does not matter very much whether men and women think us pretty or plain, but it matters very much what God thinks of us. And so I entreat you to be "doers of the Word"; at home, at school, at play, to be kind and helpful and loving; to go about, as Jesus did, doing good; so that you may be God's well-beloved children, for in God's sight "Handsome is that handsome does."—Dr. J. Jones, in The Game of Life.

Be Doers of the Word, not Hearers only.

"Saying and doing, we stand on the rock.
Saying, not doing, we stand on the sand.
Both shall be tried by the storm and the shock;
Only the rock the trial will stand."

He Knew but Did not Do. Lord Lawrence was one of the famous Viceroys of India who treated the natives like children, though he insisted that they should always be treated kindly. When Lord Mayo, his successor, arrived in India, Lord Lawrence took him for a drive, and on the way preached to him his doctrine of kindness very emphatically. On their return to the Government House the footman was slow and awkward in opening the door of the carriage, and Lord Lawrence jumped out and angrily gave the footman's ear a tug. Lord Mayo turned to the viceroy's aid and whispered, with a smile, "My first practical lesson in kindness to natives is undoubtedly an odd one."

The Deed.

It matters not how fair the vow,
How eloquent the spoken creed,
Their glory is a tinsel show
Beside the grandeur of a deed.—Thomas Curtis Clark.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.—James.

"It is true of men and watches—
You may tell them by their works."

The truths that are not translated into lives are dead truths.—Woodrow Wilson.

Not he that repeateth the name,
But he that doeth the will.—Longfellow.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.—Jesus.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. To what does "after some days" refer? 2. What is said about Mark in Acts 13.13? 3. What does Paul say about Mark in 2 Tim. 4.11, and what does this show? 4. Of which one do you approve, Paul or Barnabas, as regards his attitude toward Mark? 5. Do you ever need to be given a second chance? 6. Do you give a second chance to others who have failed you in some way? 7. When did Peter fail Jesus and how did Jesus give him another chance?

LESSON VI—AUGUST 9

BEGINNING THE SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR

GOLDEN TEXT: He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the River unto the ends of the earth.
Psalm 72.8

LESSON Acts 15.36 to 16.5 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 67

ACTS 15.36 And after some days Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, *and see* how they fare. 37 And Barnabas was minded to take with them John also, who was called Mark. 38 But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. 39 And there arose a sharp contention, so that they parted asunder one from the other, and Barnabas took Mark with him, and sailed away unto Cyprus: 40 but Paul chose Silas, and went forth, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

ACTS 16 And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess that believed; but his father was a Greek. 2 The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and he took and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those parts: for they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY PLANNED, verse 36. "After some days"—an indefinite expression denoting a considerable lapse of time,—Paul suggested to Barnabas that they revisit the churches founded on their previous journey and see how they were faring. "He would visit them that he might acquaint himself with their case, and impart unto them such spiritual gifts as were suited to it; as the physician visits his recovering patients that he may prescribe what is proper for the perfecting of his cure, and the preventing of a relapse" (Matthew Henry).

On that previous journey they had suffered much. They had been expelled from Antioch of Pisidia, they had been driven from Iconium with threats of stoning, and at Lystra Paul had been stoned and left for dead outside the city. Now Paul proposes retracing the same route.

"Give us the courage that prevails,
The steady faith that never fails" (Van Dyke).

II. PAUL AND BARNABAS SEPARATE, verses 37-39. Barnabas approved of the journey, and advised taking with them his nephew John Mark, who had started with them before and had deserted them when they reached Perga in Pamphylia. No doubt Mark had been at fault then; the question now was, should he be forgiven and given another chance? This Barnabas wanted to do, but to this Paul would not agree. Evidently Paul held with the writer of Proverbs who said, "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth and a foot out of joint." The difference over Mark resulted in a sharp contention between the two leaders. (There was also a second trouble: see Galatians 2.13.) Neither would yield in regard to Mark. Paul had not yet learned to put into practice what he afterwards wrote to the Corinthians in his great hymn of love which we shall study a month from now—Love seeketh not its own, is not provoked, and taketh not account of evil, beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

"It is not easy to give wrongdoers a second chance. An Uncle Barnabas is not always at hand to take care of John Mark. This giving of another chance is a coöperative effort. No one person, however willing, can often go far in this matter. We need helpers for counsel. We need helpers, also, for breadth of opportunity. The chance that one cannot give, another one can. Those that are interested in lifting the fallen need many places in which to put them. The helpers of men need in their turn many helpers. Precisely this is the value of the Christian Church. It is a vast brotherhood of coöperative helpers. It is a tremendous manufactory of second chances. This is its serious and happy business, and all its true members are partners" (Westminster Adult Bible Class).

So great was the dissension that they parted, and each went his own way. They never worked together again. The quarrel, however, was afterward made up, for Paul speaks of Barnabas in 1 Cor. 9.6 as "of one mind" with himself.

"One of the most serious problems of modern missions is that of the personal relation of the workers. Sometimes it is necessary to 'agree to disagree'" (Dr. Charles R. Erdman).

Barnabas went with Mark to Cyprus, and here he disappears from the history of The Acts. According to tradition he remained on the island of Cyprus until his death. We have learned to admire this great-hearted leader who was so generous in his judgments and so loyal in his attachments. His judgment of Paul when he presented him as a new convert to the brethren at Jerusalem and again when he secured him as a helper in the work at Antioch had long since been justified, and his judgment of Mark was confirmed later. Without the championship and training of Mark by Barnabas, Paul himself would have missed in later years the help and comfort which Mark was to him (see 2 Tim. 4.11 and Col. 4.10, 11), and we would have missed our Second Gospel.

There may be an initial failure in a man's life, but there may be a magnificent recovery.

III. PAUL STARTS ON HIS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY WITH SILAS, verses 40, 41. Paul chose Silas for his companion. Silas is a contraction of the Latin name Silvanus, and from Acts 16.7 we know that, like Paul, Silas possessed Roman citizenship. He had first come to Antioch with the deputation from the church at Jerusalem, verses 15, 27. He had exhorted the brethren at Antioch and confirmed them, verse 32. Silas remained with Paul until they reached Corinth, where he helped to found the church (2 Cor. 1.19), and he was associated with Paul in the letters to the Thessalonians. Later he was associated with Peter, 1 Pet. 5.12.

"To this falling out of Paul and Barnabas we owe the fact that now four missionaries are in the field instead of two, for Paul takes Silas and Barnabas takes Mark and they go out preaching Jesus. I often think of this when my heart gets sore over a divided Christendom, when I see the multiplied denominations and divisions of Christians. But I believe that these very quarrels which have rent and torn the Church have multiplied greatly the preaching of Christ, and that the Church has needed the spur of denominational rivalry. Be sure of this, however much the kingdom may seem to be rent and torn by division, God lives and reigns over all, and the wrath of men shall yet redound to the building up of his kingdom" (Wilton Merle Smith).

Paul and Silas went overland, through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. The Acts does not record the founding of churches in Cilicia, but no doubt Paul had labored there between the time of his flight to Tarsus (Acts 9.30) and his going to Antioch of Syria (Acts 11.25).

IV. PAUL CHOOSES TIMOTHY FOR A HELPER, 16.1-3. Going northward through the great Cilician Gates, Paul and Silas come to Derbe and then to Lystra. At Lystra Paul found a successor to Mark in the person of a disciple named Timothy, whose father was a Greek and mother a devout Jewess. By his mother he had been trained in the Jewish Scriptures (2 Tim. 3.15), and his reputation among the brethren of Lystra and Iconium was excellent.

Although Paul had fought against requiring the circumcision of Gentiles, and was on his way through the cities carrying the decrees received at the Council of Jerusalem (our lesson two weeks ago) that the rite need not be required of Gentiles, yet he regarded it as necessary in Timothy's case as a matter of expediency because of the Jews. The Jews, Paul knew, would criticize, and to the Jews he became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews, and all things to all men that he might by all means save some.

From Paul's letters written later to Timothy, we judge that it was at this time that Timothy was also ordained, 1 Tim. 4.14; 2 Tim. 1.6.

V. THE JOURNEY CONTINUED, 16.4, 5. The decision of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem (our lesson two weeks ago), Paul delivered to the churches on the way. The faith of the churches was strengthened, and their numbers grew rapidly.

"Come to me courageful
And speak the stirring word that's strong and true."

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. In what cities did Paul found churches on the First Missionary Journey? Who was his companion and helper? How far did Mark go with them, and why did he leave?

At Antioch in Syria. The deputation from Jerusalem and the letter in regard to what should be required of Gentiles, were received at Antioch with rejoicing. Judas and Silas after exhorting the church returned to Jerusalem, but Paul and Barnabas remained with them for some time, preaching and teaching. The date is 49 A. D.

For Antioch, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, see earlier lessons.

For the Blackboard. Paul's Second Missionary Journey. Acts 15.36 to 18.22. A. D. 50-53 (Professor Ramsay's chronology).

Starting from Antioch in Syria; churches of Syria and Cilicia; Derbe and Lystra.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Mark played a coward's part when first put to the test, and this failure might have spoiled his whole future life had it not been for the faith which Barnabas had in his intrinsic worth and the training which he received in the companionship of this older friend. Barnabas and Peter and Paul and others in the Church had a great influence in the changing of this somewhat weak young man into a stalwart witness for Christ. The lives of young people are greatly influenced by the example and the companionship of those older than they.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
STRENGTHENING THE CHURCHES

Beginning the Lesson. The football squad of Yale was assembled in the dressing room before the Princeton game in 1921, the first real test of the season. As one of the men said, it was a time for Tad Jones, the head coach, to make fervid appeals to the love of *alma mater,* to give admonition and advice. This is what he said:

"Men of Yale, I don't want to say much. I wish only to say this: Win or lose, I have never known a set of men whom I have loved so well."

That was all, and it was enough. The men went out in a determined mood that could not be resisted.

And such must have been the mood of a young man named John Mark, whom Barnabas loved so well that he was willing to take him with him on a second missionary journey. Why was Paul unwilling to do this?

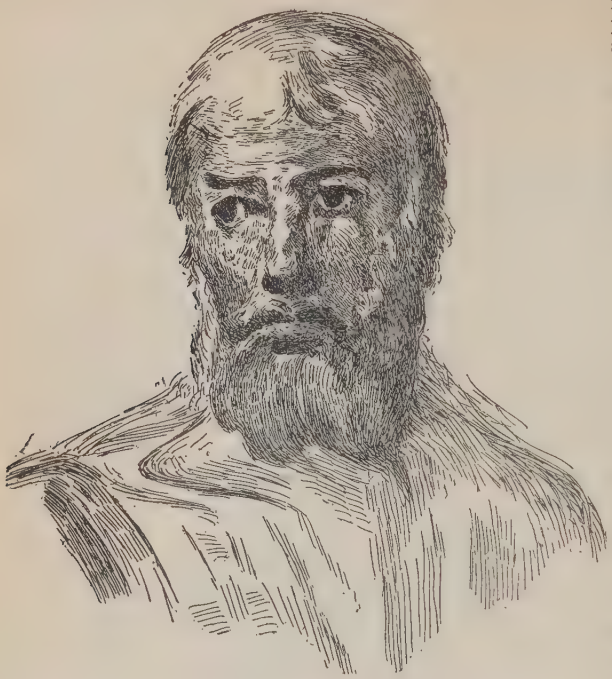
Paul and Barnabas Contrasted. Paul was a "bonny fighter!" If a menace arose, or any threat was in the air, his spirit was refreshed. Where is there a record of any antagonist appearing where we find Paul nervously sulking away to his tent? The way of difficulty was always his favorite road. He loved the battle and the breeze. He revelled in close grips with stern wrestlers, and that day was always most welcome that promised a struggle from which he could extort the prize of victory.

But Barnabas was a very different type of man. He was more a man of the fireside. He was gentle, companionable, sweet. He was pastoral where Paul was militant. He was the son of consolation while Paul was a man of war. Where Paul would carry a sword, in readiness for an adversary, Barnabas would carry a wallet, filled with oil and wine, in readiness for any traveler whom he might find robbed and beaten on the road. He was a peacemaker, and he was great in the ministry of reconciliation. When Paul would have dismissed a man for cowardice, Barnabas would give him another chance. It was the difference between Jonathan and David, between John and Peter, between Ridley and Latimer, between Gordon and Kitchener.—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in God Our Contemporary.

Matthew Henry's Homily upon the Contention between Paul and Barnabas. The best of men are but men, "subject to like passions" as we are, as these two good men had expressly owned concerning themselves (14.15), and now it appeared too true. I doubt not there was (as usually there is in such contentions) a fault on both sides. Perhaps Paul was too severe upon the young man, and did not allow his fault the extenuation it was capable of, did not consider what a useful woman his mother was in Jerusalem (12.12), nor make the allowances he might have made to Barnabas's fault that he took this into consideration, in a case wherein the interest of Christ's Kingdom was concerned, and indulged it too much. And they were

certainly both in fault to be so hot as to let the contention be sharp (it is to be feared they gave each other some hard words), as also to be so stiff as each to stick resolutely to his opinion, and neither to yield. Was there never a wise man among them to interpose his good office and to put them in mind that the false brethren among them would warm their hands at the flames of the contention between Paul and Barnabas?

We must not say, "What if I was in a passion, were not Paul and Barnabas so?" No; it must check our censures of others, and moderate them. Repentance teaches us to be severe in reflections upon ourselves; but charity teaches us to be candid in our reflections upon others. It is only Christ's example that is a copy without a blot.



A Second Century Portrait of Paul
The fresco is on the wall of a chamber unearthed in Rome in 1922. It is believed by archæologists to date back to the second century, and has been heralded as a portrait of Paul

Strengthening the Churches. "Ninety-nine out of a hundred people," a forceful writer affirms, "want encouragement all the time, and the hundredth wants encouragement for only twenty-three hours and fifty-nine minutes every day" Encouragement is in truth a much needed grace.

In various occupations in India there are men who are called *sha-bash-wallah*—men whose only duty it is to wander about among the workers and call out *sha-bash chai,* which means "Courage, brothers," or "Cheer up, brothers." Paul knew the difficulties with which the new churches were contending, and he felt it his duty to be a *sha-bash-wallah;* he determined to go about among them and encourage, hearten, strengthen them in their work.

"Doubt and fear and a word of dread
Can make the warrior hang his head;
Faith and hope and a love-born song
Can make the weakest brave and strong."

Paul must have feared also lest the members of the new churches should backslide. A deacon in a country church, eager for his minister's success in the work, once cried in his prayer, "Lord, *shove him on!*" We can readily imagine that this was what Paul desired to accomplish in revisiting the churches he had founded.

Encouragement has been described as the comradely touch that dispels fear and wakens brave resolve; as the heartening words that can sting on occasion, but only in order to brace and heal, never to wound; as the word that cheers without deluding, comforts without weakening, kindles hope without deceiving. "It is the outflowing of broad rivers of strength and sympathy, whose springs lie far beyond the heart from which they go forth, in the eternal Hills of God."

How Kiyomatsu Kimura, "the Japanese Billy Sunday," Strengthens Converts. I walked down the Ginza (Tokyo's Broadway) and I saw a man selling tops.

He had ten or twelve tops all spinning at once. When any top would begin to wobble, he would give it a quick turn with his finger, and so he went from one top to another, speeding them up when they began to lag. Many Christians are like those tops. Some will go perhaps a few months, some a year, then they have to be turned again. And the pastor spends all his time spurring up the wobbly Christians in his congregations. Shame on you, Christians! Instead of shouldering the world, you yourselves must be borne. Wake up, Christians! Stand up, brace up; resolve tonight never to falter until you have borne sinful Japan on your shoulders to the throne of Christ.

For Discussion. 1. "The cities were first captured for Christianity. Is it true today that as go the cities, morally and religiously, so goes a country, and who saves his city saves all things?"

2. Paul's breadth and narrowness. See Chapter XVII of The Character of Paul, by Dr. C. E. Jefferson.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why are those led by the Spirit not under the law? 2. What is meant here by "flesh" and by "Spirit"? 3. What is indicated by the fact that "fruit" instead of "fruits" is used in verse 22? 4. In business is it possible to manifest the fruit of the Spirit?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
MISSIONARY RECRUITS

Beginning the Lesson. Point out the course which Paul and Barnabas took on their First Missionary Journey. From which city were they expelled? In which were they threatened with stoning? In which was Paul actually stoned? Where have Paul and Barnabas been since that journey? Now what does Paul propose doing? What do you think of his courage? What answer does Barnabas make? Why did Barnabas wish to have Mark accompany them? Why did Paul object to this? What can be said for Paul's position?

A company of young people was being organized for evangelistic work in the slums of a great city. Some of those who had volunteered the leader refused to accept. When asked his reasons, he replied: "Those whom I have declined to take have no confidence in the undertaking. They say the odds are aganist us. We can't take the fearful with us when on such serious business." This leader was in the position of Paul as regards Mark, and there is much to be said in favor of his attitude.

Yet there was another side to the question. And that side Barnabas took. What can be said for the position of Barnabas in the matter? Do you agree with him? How did it all turn out?

Continue with Text Explained.

The Coward May Become Brave. John Mark was a young man of generous impulse, but lacking in courage. In a fit of enthusiasm he volunteered for the mission field, but at the first sign of danger he returned home.

For his enthusiasm I have nothing but praise. But while his enthusiasm is wholly admirable, yet Mark's conduct teaches us to beware of trusting to merely generous impulses and passing emotions. Generous impulses, a fit of enthusiasm, are not sufficient to carry a man through life; at any rate, through the Christian life. Enthusiasm has a trick of evaporating in face of difficulties. To live the Christian life, in addition to enthusiasm, we must have unshakable convictions, we must be men of rock-like steadfastness.

You will remember that Jesus pictures, in one of his inimitable parables, the man whose religion is a matter of emotion and impulse. It is John Mark's picture to the life. This kind of man, when he hears the Word, "straightway with joy receiveth it." There you have the outburst of enthusiasm. But it is not all plain sailing in the Christian life. Difficulties soon come. What then? Well, listen. "When persecution or trouble ariseth because of the Word, straightway he is offended." We all have known men of that sort. John Bunyan has filled out the picture in his character of Temporary, in the Pilgrim's Progress. We have all met Temporary.

But the men Christ wants are not Temporaries who will run away at the first approach of danger; he wants those who will endure firm and steadfast and true, right to the end.

Was the fate of Bunyan's Mr. Temporary, John Mark's fate? No, John Mark was no castaway, but by the grace of God he developed into a brave and faithful soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ. It cut him to the quick that Paul should doubt

him, but he did not give up his idea of being a missionary because Paul would not take him as his companion. He went into the field with Barnabas, and though the history does not give us details, we know that, in the course of years, out of weakness Mark became strong. The unstable, unreliable, inconstant man, by the discipline of the years, became a faithful, steadfast disciple.

Paul noted the change, and the same Paul who had carried his protest against Mark's cowardice so far as to break with Barnabas, his bosom friend, sends for Mark to come to him. "Take Mark," he writes to Timothy, "and bring him with you, for he is profitable to me for ministering." The man whom once Paul discarded as useless and worthless he sends for now as being profitable to him for ministering. I think of all people no one rejoiced over the change in Mark more than Paul himself. I can imagine his saying when they met, "Forgive me that I doubted thee"; and if I know anything of human nature, Mark's cup of joy was full when Paul placed his confidence in him once again and sent for him. For the mere sending for him just then argued boundless confidence in John Mark's courage and devotion. For Paul was in prison in Rome, and the end was near.

This John Mark, ready to stand by Paul's side in Rome at the risk of imprisonment, and even of death, is a very different man from the John Mark who ran away from Pamphylia. Different, and yet the same. By the grace of God he had been made anew, the strain of weakness had been eradicated, the worthless became profitable, the fickle steadfast, the coward a hero. In Cyprus, in Colosse, in Rome, Mark witnessed a good confession, and at last laid down his life for Christ in the streets of Alexandria. Mark's symbol in art is the lion. Had you seen him in Pamphylia you would have said the timid hare would have been an apter symbol; but the old artists judged rightly. This man who ran away from the work became in process of time a perfect lion in courage and dauntless bravery.

And the lesson of quite infinite encouragement from the contemplation of Mark's history is that the weak may become strong, the unstable constant, the coward brave.—Condensed from St. Paul's Certainties, by J. D. Jones.

God is far more Merciful than Man. There is a sinning woman at Jesus's feet. The Pharisees crowd around crying for her condemnation. That's man. Jesus says, "Neither do I condemn thee, go, and sin no more." That's God. The thief groans upon the cross, suffering well-deserved punishment. That's man. To his cry for mercy the suffering Jesus answers, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." That's God.—Dr. Wilton Merle Smith.

A Dependable Missionary Recruit. Paul was greatly drawn to Timothy, but he took the precaution to inquire what kind of reputation he bore. "Would Timothy make a good missionary?" he asked the people of Lystra, and they said that they thought highly of him, and added, "He is well reported of the brethren in Iconium." Paul was satisfied, and he put the matter before Timothy.

"Will you come with me on my journey carrying the good news of the love of God as shown in Jesus Christ?" Basil Mathews imagines Paul saying, and telling him how John Mark had turned back in fear. "This is no easy thing," he would tell Timothy. "We must be ready to face weariness and pain, hunger and thirst and cold, storm and brigands, stoning and beatings, imprisonment and the fear of death."

"But (in the words of Basil Mathews) as he looked into the face of Timothy and saw all his brave spirit looking at him with love and worship, eager to dare any danger if he might only be with his master Paul, he could not hesitate, but gave the word that Timothy was to travel with them on the new adventure into lands that none of them had ever seen."

Timothy proved a most trustworthy and helpful recruit. Later when Paul was writing to the church which he had founded at Philippi, he said of Timothy, "As a child serveth a father, so he served me in furtherance of the gospel." "He worketh the work of the Lord as I also do," Paul wrote of Timothy to the Corinthians.

"Timothy was always running other people's errands, lifting other people's burdens, making sympathetic inquiries at other people's doors,"—thus Dr. Jowett pictures his activities. "His prayers were just crammed with other people's miseries and other people's needs. He almost forgot himself in his remembrance of others. And so it came to pass that the Lord remembered him, and Timothy became strong and beautiful before the gaze of his fellow men."

A Recruit who Refused to Quit. On the campus of one of the large universities in the Middle West a monument has been set in honor of one of the students who died fighting in France. On it is this simple but appealing inscription: "He played on the scrub three years; he refused to quit."

Day after day the boy—Hanson was his name—went out and played with the "scrubs" to help the "varsity." Then came the summons to play a sterner game on the fields of France, and he took his place.

On the battlefield he exhibited the same fidelity as on the football field. One day his officer called for volunteers for a hazardous bit of scouting. Hanson went out with the party, but he never returned. And today that little inscription on the monument recalls to the hurrying students the story of a man who refused to quit.

"He refused to quit!" What finer tribute can be given to any man? When Jesus named for his disciples those qualities which he regarded as most essential in a Christian disciple, he put at the head of the list steadfastness; and he closed his discourse with these solemn words that carry the same sense, "No man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."—The Youth's Companion.

A Noted Missionary Recruit. "We love you, pastor, but don't you think you would better resign? There hasn't been a convert this year." Such were the hard words to which our aged pastor once listened. "Yes," he sorrowfully replied, "it has been a dull year—sadly dull to me. Yet I mind me that one did come, wee Bobby Moffat. But he is so wee a bairn that I suppose it is not right to count him."

The others in the church didn't count wee Bobby Moffat, but they allowed the pastor to remain, and a few years later Bobby came to him and said: "Do you think that I could ever learn to preach? I feel within here something that tells me I ought to. If I could just lead souls to Christ that would be happiness to me."

And the pastor answered: "Well, Bobby, you might; who knows? At least you can try."

We all know how he tried and became a wonderful missionary to Africa, so famous that when he returned to England on a visit the King of England and the members of the British Parliament rose to honor him.

Wee Bobby Moffat was a new recruit that even his discouraged pastor supposed it was not right to count, but he became one of the world's greatest missionaries.

New Recruits. At the annual meetings of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions many memorable hours are spent in listening to the stories of veterans returned from the front; but on the last morning one fruitful hour is given to the young men and women about to set sail for the first time for foregin lands.

They are a varied company. Side by side, for example, sit two young men. One is the descendant of eight generations of American forbears. He was valedictorian of his class in college; and he won a fellowship in competition with men all of whom were far above the average in scholarship. Beside him sits one whose parents thirty years ago came to America almost penniless and unable to read a word of English.

One by one the new recruits rise, and in a few words tell their life-story and purpose. They are going to lands that most of them have never seen—to Africa and China, Japan and India. They are so young, they know so little of what is before them, they combine so remarkably youthful daring with calm consecration.

They are the coming heroes and heroines. They are going forth to teach, to preach, to heal, to translate, to live and love and give and serve. Some of them will never return, and those who do return will be greatly changed.

One of the members of the Board said after a meeting: "It is a scene to which I look forward and which I remember as I do no other in the great annual gathering. It is not that I do not honor the older men and women. I honor them far more than I do these young people; but no scene I am called upon to witness touches my heart more deeply or keeps me more nearly on the verge of tears than this final morning, when we see and greet and speed away these young soldiers of the Cross of Christ, and send them into all the world."—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

Give him another chance and see
How beautiful his life may be.—Alfred J. Hough.

Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.—Isaiah.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Who wrote the Epistle to the Galatians? 2. What reason does he give in Gal. 1.6,7 for writing it? 3. What does he mean by verse 15? 4. What did Jesus say about bearing fruit? 5. Commit to memory the list given as "the fruit of the Spirit."

TEMPERANCE LESSON

GOLDEN TEXT: Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Galatians 6.7

LESSON Galatians 5.13-24 DEVOTIONAL READING Proverbs 23.29-35

GALATIANS 5.13 For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only *use* not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16 But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*: fornication, uncleanliness, lasciviousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, 21 envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. 24 And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE FLESH AGAINST THE SPIRIT

I. THE POWER OF LOVE, verses 13-15. Brothers, wrote Paul, you are free from the Law, but Christian liberty does not mean that you can do as you please: do not use your freedom as a license for indulging your lower impulses, but live in accordance with the law of love. *Flesh* is used here for "that element of man's nature which is opposed to goodness, and makes for evil. It signifies the entire potency of sin." Through loving service for others you fulfil the whole divine law, which is, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Paul here quotes Lev. 19.18. Then, remembering that the Galatians were prone to quarrel, he adds, But if ye bite and devour one another—act toward one another like dogs or wild beasts—beware lest you destroy one another.

"No man resolved to make the most of himself can spare the time for personal contention. Still less can he afford to take all the consequences, including the vitiating of his temper and the loss of self-control" (Abraham Lincoln).

THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT, verses 16-18. Be guided by the Holy Spirit, and then you will not fulfil the desire of your evil nature.

"Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk;
For I lift up my soul unto thee" (Psalms).

For the evil nature and the indwelling Holy Spirit are antagonistic. "Throughout this passage the Spirit is evidently the Divine Spirit, for the human spirit in itself and unaided does not stand in direct antagonism to the flesh" (Lightfoot). The Spirit strives to hinder you from obeying your evil nature, and your evil nature strives to hinder you from obeying the Spirit, for they are at warfare one with the other, and prevent your doing what you would. "I perceive the better, but I follow the worse" (Ovid).

"Paul's theory of life seems to be as follows: Man's glory lies in his will. In him, however, are two hostile forces. The flesh seeks ascendancy, urging him to choose the things he likes. The Spirit urges him to unite himself with God and things divine, to use his will to govern his life according to spirtiual motives.

"Are we conscious of this dualism? Do we know anything in ourselves corresponding to Stevenson's story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde? Is it a hardship, a disadvantage, to have this conflict for the possession of our wills? Paul says, No. It is by struggle that we have to form and to cherish our ideals. We always have the choice of motives, the choice of roads, open to us. A life that is disciplined blossoms to loveliness and becomes fruitful" (Dr. John Gardner).

If you are led by the Spirit (Rom. 8.14), Paul continues, you are not under the law, for you will not disobey it. "Law exists for the purpose of restraint, but in the works of the Spirit there is nothing to restrain" (Lightfoot).

III. THE WORKS OF THE FLESH, verses 19-21. The works of the flesh are manifest—plainly seen—Paul declares, and then he gives a repelling list of some fifteen vices which were common among the Galatians. "The words fall into four groups. The first group includes three sins in which sensuality in the narrower sense is prominent; the second includes two that are associated with heathen religions; the third group contains eight in which the element of conflict with others is present; the fourth consists of drunkenness and its natural accompaniments." Strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings—all were evils which Paul especially noted in Asia Minor where there were so much rivalry and wrangling among the chief cities for the honor of first place in a province. It even came to pass that the Emperor was called upon to settle rival claims.

I forewarn you, tell you plainly, even as I did on my visits to you (Gal. 1.9; 4.13), Paul adds, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

"Before we grow the fruit of the Spirit we must clear the ground and pluck up the roots of the trees that bear the fruits of the flesh. I read in the memories of a country vicar that he found the glebeland had been neglected for years, and the soil was so knotted with squitch and was so poisoned with noxious weeds that it took years to clear it and prepare it for the cultivation of anything that was worth cultivating. So it is, only much more so, with the man or woman who has allowed heart and mind to be overgrown with the rank weeds of self-indulgence. Those weeds are deeply rooted, and they need painful pulling and digging out, so painful that one needs almost superhuman strength to accomplish the operation" (H. Jeffs).

IV. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, verses 22-24. Paul next lists nine qualities as the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.

"Observe that he does not say fruits, but fruit. "That means that we are not to be content with one or two, but all nine are to be in every individual life. It is not for one man to show love, and another joy, and another peace; but it is for one man to show the whole nine elements. It is like a cluster of grapes. You need every one of the grapes to make up this cluster" (Dr. Griffith Thomas).

The Expositor's Greek Testament calls our attention to the fact that it is clear from the subordinate place assigned to "faith" that it does not here denote the cardinal grace of faith in God which is the very root of all religion, but rather good faith in dealings with men, and due regard to just claims. Note too, that "self-control" in our Revised Version takes the place of "temperance" in the Authorized Version. This is because we have limited the word *temperance* to abstinence from strong drink, whereas it concerns the avoidance of many evils and has been well defined as "a practised mastery of self," self-control.

Followers of Christ, Paul tells the Galatians, put to a violent death their evil tendencies. Walking by the Spirit is the effect of living by the Spirit. If the Divine Spirit has control of our spirit, then we are "of Christ," and are living loftily, doing daily what we believe Christ would have us do.

"Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control—these are the separate features that go to make up a good photograph of the Master. Go through the catalog, and interrogate yourself concerning every article in it. Love! Are you affectionate, loving, self-sacrificing? Joy! Are you bright and happy, and sunny? Peace! Do you lead a quiet and peaceful life in all goodness and gravity? Longsuffering! Are you patient, in the shop, in the home, with those under your authority? Kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control! Do you possess these things? Wherever the Spirit of Christ is, there these things are" (Dr. J. D. Jones).

"Have we not reason to suspect that these present graces of ours are most starved and meager; that our kindness, justice, truth, patience, purity, and love are the meanest of growths; that they are only as the wild fruits of the wilderness, as the coarse grasses and dwarf blossoms of the prairie?" (Dr. Watkinson).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. From what letter of Paul's have we already had a temperance lesson? What was the temperance argument of the text selected?

The Province of Galatia. Galatia was the great Roman province which extended from north to south across the central plateau of Asia Minor. It was named from the Gauls who had come to the northern part of the province from the Rhine region in the third century B. C. In Southern Galatia were the cities where Paul had founded churches on his Second Missionary Journey—Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.

It is interesting to remind ourselves that Angora, today the new capital of Turkey, was the ancient capital of Galatia.

Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. The Epistle is largely a defence of Paul's apostolic standing (in which he reviews his life from his conversion to the close of the Council at Jerusalem), and an endeavor to keep the gospel free from the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic system, which were by no means essential to salvation.

In the fifth chapter Paul has been telling his readers that Christ sets them free from the bondage of the old law, and has been urging them to hold fast their freedom. Now in our lesson text he tells them not to err in thinking that freedom from the requirements of the law means disobedience to its spirit, which is that of love to others.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE FLESH AGAINST THE SPIRIT

Beginning the Lesson. The One Volume Commentary has this excellent paraphrase of our text from the Epistle to the Galatians:—

Cling, then, to your freedom from legal rules and customs; but remember that freedom meants not license, but loving service. For love is the essence of God's love, whereas mutual backbiting and hatred can only end in the destruction of one another's spiritual life.

In the life which is fostered by the Spirit you will find your true safety against the evils of which I am warning you. For between the pure aspirations of the Spirit and the sinful impulses of the flesh there is a sharp, irrepressible conflict. If you live under the influence of the Spirit of God, you have no need to seek the guidance of law. Contrast the sins which spring from the carnal impulses with the virtues which spring from the Spirit's guidance. The former exclude from God's Kingdom; the Christian must abjure them; but the latter are not condemned by any law.

If, then, we possess the Spirit in our hearts, let our outward action be under his guidance.

The Flesh against the Spirit. Charles Haddon Spurgeon has left on record an interesting account of a visit he made to the Library at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he saw a fine statue of Lord Byron. All the world knows something of the tragically sad career into which Byron was hurled by sinful indulgence. He has well described his own condition in these words, written on his thirty-sixth birthday:

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

Mr. Spurgeon says the librarian instructed him to stand in a certain position and look upon the statue of Byron. He looked and said: "What a fine intellectual countenance! What a grand genius he was!" The librarian then led Spurgeon to a position on the other side and told him to look again. Then there seemed to be in the face of Byron such a scowl and dreadful leer as Milton would have painted into the face of Satan when he said, "Better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven." "Do you think the artist designed this?" Spurgeon asked. The librarian answered, "Yes, he wished to picture two characters—the great, the almost superhuman genius, and yet the enormous mass of sin that was in his soul."—Joseph Nelson Greene, in The Portrait of the Prodigal.

Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God. Down in some dark corner of the heart, there may be the old grudge against someone whom we may imagine to have done us a wrong. Perhaps we do not think of it very much, but there it is, full of dangerous possibilities, like old waste soaked with oil; and it may be some day that a single word which angers us, or a little slight which may not have been intended, falls on that ugly grudge like a match, and it flames up into some explosion of temper which we are bitterly ashamed of afterwards. Or in a corner of the mind

may be the impure memory, or the unclean imagination which we have not set ourselves to clear away; and one day the flame of some temptation falls upon it, and the fire of some evil recklessness leaps up and scars us in a way which it is hard ever again to hide. The only safe thing is to take care before the fire comes that there is nothing in us to start, and to spread, the blaze.

There needs to be a "Fire Prevention Week" every once in a while for all Christian people—a time when everybody will pray, in the beautiful words of the psalm, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," and when everybody will set to work to clear out the ancient grudges and the ugly thoughts, and everything else on which the fires of evil might feed.—W. Russell Bowie, in The Armor of Youth.

Indolence a Fleshly Lust. We all know men who continue to the end of their days "unfulfilled prophecies"; who have shown in their youth the promise of high achievement, and perhaps the sign of genius, but who leave the world with their poems unwritten, their schemes of philosophy unorganized, or their social and political reforms unattempted. Such men are often illustrations of the failure that is the inevitable penalty of indolence. Its moral effects are not less disastrous. Some men fall into such physical habits that they never seem to be fairly awake. Hard work of every kind, whether of muscle or brain, they systematically evade. They "take things easy." They "do not excite themselves." They think they are very harmless, even praiseworthy people; and do not see that indolence has grown upon them till the soul is no longer master of itself, or of the body which ought to serve it. The immorality of their life it may perhaps be impossible to make clear to them; but they may be made to perceive that habits which destroy all intensity and depth and vehemence of religious feeling must involve them in guilt. Every spiritual impulse is enfeebled, every devout affection is deadened, every act of worship is made a weariness, by the sluggishness into which they have permitted themselves to sink. Of the earth earthy, they have become incapable of the diviner moments and joys of the spiritual life.—The Expository Times.

Whatsoever a Man Soweth, that shall he also Reap. Sin of any kind speaks defeat and extinction. Trace its progress in your own heart—the lust for pleasure or gold or honor—and mark how it has ruined all that was best in you. Watch how those who openly or secretly defy the great laws written in every human heart, have often to hide their heads in poverty or loneliness or shame. See how the nations which have given themselves over to the lusts of the flesh have gone down before the inexorable laws which they defied. Before our eyes there are nations dying of their "centuries of folly, noise and sin." And shall we be found to fight against God? Surely the way of transgressors is hard; for all the laws of God's world are against them. To connect ourselves consciously with evil is to evoke a Nemesis whose stroke, be it swift or slow, nothing but the all-pitiful grace of God can stay.—Dr. John Edgar McFadyen, in In the Hour of Silence.

Why is the Fruit of the Spirit not more Universally Possessed? There are men who take what they call a commonsense view of life. They would say (perhaps I may do the thinking of some of you aloud for a moment): "We know the value of love at least. We want the love of one true heart, whether it be that of a man or a woman. It is a great prize to have and retain. But love in ordinary business life, love in social relationships outside the circle of our own immediate family group—how ridiculous! We recognize the beauty of joy and covet it. But joy in a world that is so full of sorrow and injustice and all manner of untoward things—why, it is absurd to regard it as part of the very stuff of life. Peace? The world is not ready for peace, not sufficiently educated. The only way of peace is the way of strength. Goodness? Oh, yes, we respect goodness, but so often goodness seems to us a weak thing. Kindness? We believe in the law of kindness, but if you are too kind people will take advantage of you. Meekness? Yes, we recognize there is a certain beauty about it; but meekness in my factory, in my business—why, I should be run over and trampled under foot!"

If you want to argue with me that in this rough and tumble world these things are too ideal to be practical, I know you can amass facts I cannot deny. At the same time, there is another type of mind that can present an argument equal to yours, supported with historical evidence, and convincing one that love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, kindness, are the only things that count.

The world is lopsided. We are over-developed on the side of the flesh and under-developed on the side of the spirit. How few people there are who even dare to believe that it might be possible to conduct the business of life upon the principles

of love! Why, you see, we shrink from the very word. Let men take another word which means essentially the same thing: coöperation. Supposing all the intricate relationships of mankind which center in commerce and industry were conducted eventually not upon lines of exploitation but of coöperation. That is not a mad dream, surely, but is a dream in which few venture to indulge.

Take joy. How few people have found the secret of true joy and how much of what we call joy is a hectic things; a thing that does not exist in its own right, but depends upon something outside itself—money, or position, or some other external element; a frail thing likely to be wrecked at any moment. How few people have even tried to achieve the joy which wells up within like a well of living water. So we might go through the list. You look me in the eyes and say, "All very well; you are essentially an idealist, but your ideals won't work." Well, then, I say that the very fact that you say that helps to stop them from working. The question I am asking you just now is not what is the law of the world, but on what side you are flinging your manhood, and in what cause you are exhorting your heart, your brain, your conscience. Most great things such as these are not impossible because they are irrational, but because not enough people believe in them.—Condensed from a Sermon by Dr. F. W. Norwood, in The Homiletic Review.

For Discussion. 1. Is the world growing better?

2. Be such a man and live such a life that if every man were such as you and every life a life like yours, this earth would be a paradise.—Phillips Brooks.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What famous battle near the city of Philippi is recorded in Shakespeare's Julius Cæsar? 2. What does the pronoun "we" in verse 10 indicate? 3. How was Paul hindered in his plans? 4. Why was it more important that he should enter Europe? 5. Where did Judson, the great missionary, want to go, how was he hindered, and what better field did he find?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
DRUNKENNESS AND KINDRED EVILS

Beginning the Lesson. In the castle of the old Danish stronghold of Kronborg four striking pictures hang, which once seen never can be forgotten.

In the first picture you see a boat starting out to sea. In the middle of the boat a charming blond-haired boy sits looking with childish eagerness at the waves. By his side an angel stands guard. At the end of the boat there are two small figures, one bright and joyous, who has hold of the rudder; the other dark and gloomy, who is asleep. The one is the good spirit of the boy; the other the evil spirit.

In the second picture the boy has become a young man, eagerly looking ahead at some goal. The good spirit still directs the rudder and controls the sails, but the evil spirit has awakened and is secretly trying to wrest the rudder from the good spirit. Will he succeed?

The third picture gives the answer. The young man has become a middle-aged man. With all his strength he is trying to meet the terrible storm that has arisen. The sky is lowering. The good spirit sits weeping, while the evil spirit holds the rudder and guides the boat into the storm.

In the last picture there sits a weary, silver-haired old man. The storm has spent its force, the evening sun is shining through the clouds and lighting up the near-by haven. But the mast of the boat is broken, and only with great difficulty is the good spirit guiding it thither, for the evil spirit has been vanquished.

These four pictures portray the conflict that Paul in our lesson today says each one must wage. There are two great antagonists in each Christian, the lower, evil inclinations that left to themselves will drag him down, and the higher, good inclinations, the fruit of the divine Spirit operating on the human spirit, that are leading him upward. Which shall win?

Uncleanness. About thirty years ago there stood on the most splendid avenue of Newport, a palace built by one of the richest men of New York. It was said to be a copy of the Palazzo Doria in Venice. There was a Moorish room, a Chinese room, a gallery of pictures of the most famous of modern masters. It was a luxurious, beautiful home.

The owner took possession of it in May, and in July his only son died of a low, lingering fever. During the seven succeeding years the house was occupied by different tenants, but ill health or death visited each. It was found at last, after

repeated, fruitless examinations, that an old drain existed under the foundations of the house, and that, unseen, it had been pouring death into the beautiful dwelling all these years. The walls were so impregnated with poison that the house, after remaining without a tenant for some time, was razed to the ground.

The lives of some men are like this dwelling. They have every fortunate circumstance which good birth, influence, wealth, or education can give to make them strong, and noble, and helpful to other men; yet some foul trait, inherited or acquired, breathes poison and death through the whole life.

There is a marble bust of the boy Nero in the gallery of the Uffizi palace which shows him to have been "that noble child" of whom history tells us, affectionate, gay, and kind; but the sensual lip hints of deadly poison already at work within, and it foretold the monster of history.

Physicians sometimes examine the blood of their patients and detect disease by the revelations of the microscope. Every one who is beginning his work in the world should search his heart, if, perchance, there may be in it a poisoned drop which may corrupt and ruin his life.—The Youth's Companion.

Do not Defile Yourself. You know how bees love to go in and out among the flowers, how, getting pollen on their legs, they carry it from one flower to another, and spoil the color of them, sometimes. I remember a flower of a lovely new color; all the summer people stopped and said how beautiful it was. And next year we watched, and we waited for it, and then buds formed, and then they slowly opened, and—whatever was wrong? The beautiful flower was quite spoiled: it was all blotchy, like your little brother when he had measles, only it had all kinds of colors mixed up in little bits. And the wise people told me that it was the bees that had done this.

Ah, but there are some wise plants that shut up, and won't let insects in. No, they seem to say, none of you and your meddlesomeness. I don't work to be made of different colors, I want to keep white and clean, and they shut up tight. Remember that when some fellow wants you to listen to a nasty story, or tries to lead you into what you know is not playing the game, or tempts you; shut up at once, keep out these tiresome bees and don't allow them to meddle with you.—The Expository Times.

A Single Idle Word. "I was not a bad young man," said an elderly gentleman lately, "but was given to fun, enjoyed a good time, and while not usually vulgar or low in my conversation, had a keen sense of the ludicrous, and could not always resist the temptation to make an apt rejoinder, even when it involved some coarseness.

"A party of us were camping, mostly young fellows, but one or two were middle-aged men. We had a good time, and there was only one thing to regret, and that I have regretted all my life. We sat around the fire the first evening telling stories, and a story which one of the older men told suggested an obscene comment, which I uttered before I thought twice.

"I could have bitten my tongue off the next instant. The man simply looked straight at me for a moment across the fire, and I knew that he judged me by that remark. I knew that I did not deserve the opinion which in that instant he formed of me; but I knew also that I had given him just cause to estimate me as he did.

"All that night I lay looking up at the stars and thinking over what I had said. I was not habitually vulgar, but for that one word, and all like words and thoughts, I despised myself.

"In a strange way, after a year or two had passed, my name was mentioned for a position which was desirable, and which I seemed likely to secure, but this man was one of three to decide the matter. I could never doubt that a quiet intimation that he considered me unfit was what defeated me.

"Later I found a situation which, although a good one, was in a very different line of work from what I had chosen, and I have never doubted that my whole life was changed by that idle word.

"Did I learn the lesson? Yes, I did! My habit, now almost lifelong, has made impurity, even in its milder forms, repulsive. The memory of that incident has stopped many a hasty utterance, and in the years that followed it the warning of the Divine Teacher has added a sense of responsibiltiy to the sense of shame. 'I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.'"—The Youth's Companion.

Cigarettes. As a rule, the cigarette boy leads his class at the foot. The Superintendent of the schools of New York City declares that cigarette smoking is one of the worst habits a boy can acquire: it hinders his growth, it retards his intellectual

development, and, worst of all, it weakens his will, and thus renders him less capable of resisting temptation to evil courses.

A Basket of Fruit. What a lovely basket of summer fruit! And it is mixed fruits, not a basket of apples, or pears, or grapes only. In a horticultural show you will see plates of particular fruits, to which prizes have been awarded. Sometimes you will see a plate heaped up with all kinds of fruit, to which a prize has been given for the best assortment. All the prizes offered in the Heavenly Horticultural Exhibition are for collections of mixed fruits. The fact is that in spiritual horticulture it is difficult, if not impossible, to grow one kind without the others. It is true we have the figure of Jesus as the vine, and we as the branches; but the branches, vitalized by the Divine sap, bear all the fruits of the Spirit.

The trouble is, that so many Christians think they can make a fair show of one kind of fruit, without trying to grow the rest. A man, for instance, will specialise on temperance, in the limited modern acceptation of temperance, and he might feel disposed to enter as a competitor in the Heavenly Horticultural Show in the class "Temperance"; but when it came to long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, he would probably say, "No; I don't think I have anything worth showing in those classes."

In the 92nd Psalm there is a beautiful promise that "those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall still bring forth fruit in their old age." This reminds us of John's Tree of Life in his vision of the New Jerusalem, which bore fruit all the year round. Sometimes you will go into a garden and find an old fruit tree with gnarled trunk, and the owner will tell you, "That tree used to bear splendid apples but it has seen its best days and bears little or nothing now. I shall have it cut down." The trees in the Lord's garden, however, the older they get are the more fruitful. Their boughs are never so heavily laden, nor with such luscious fruit, as when they are approaching the end of the allotted span of earthly life.

How shall we be fruit-bearers? Only by union with him who is the vine. The closer our communion with God the more fruitful are we. If we are bearing little fruit, and that of poor quality, it shows that our attachment to the vine is a very slender one. There are some who bear fruit indeed, but it is scarcely worth the gathering. There are apples, but they are crab-apples; there are pears, but they are tasteless and woody. Let us all aim to be fruit-bearers.—H. Jeffs, in The Art of Sermon Illustration.

The Fruit of the Spirit is Joy. You have heard of the little girl who prayed, "Dear Lord, make all bad people good, and all good people nice." There are many good people who, though free from all the evil qualities listed by Paul in our text, are not "nice" to live with, because they are narrow in every sense of the word. Their religion has not made them joyous. "Religion is a love which radiates, a happiness which overflows."

"It is a comely fashion to be glad:
Joy is the grace we say to God."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Of all combats, the sorest is to conquer ourselves.—Thomas à Kempis.

Cherish your body, for God made it great;
It has a guest of might and high estate;
Keep the shrine noble, handsome, high and whole,
For in it lives God's work, a kingly soul.—James Bartlett Wiggin.

Cigarette smoking boys are like wormy apples—they drop long before the harvest time.—Dr. David Starr Jordan.

The boy who cannot kill off a bad habit, must live with it till it kills him.—The Youth's Companion.

My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.—Tennyson.

You can look upon your life today as a precious gift, to be treated sacredly; you can refuse to do anything that would soil its purity or damage its strength.—Dr. C. C. Hall.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the meaning of *assayed,* verse 7? 2. Locate on the map all the places mentioned in the lesson. 3. In what parable did Jesus speak of purple as the attire of the wealthy? (Lk. 16.10.) 4. What does Paul say about the woman of Philippi in his Epistle to the Philippians, 4.2,3? 5. How was Paul hindered and led on this journey? 6. How was Livingstone hindered and led in his travels?

THE MACEDONIAN CALL

GOLDEN TEXT: Come over into Macedonia, and help us. Acts 16.9

LESSON Acts 16.6-15 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 6.1-8

ACTS 16.6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; 7 and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; 8 and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; 12 and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a *Roman* colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days. 13 And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshiped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. FRUSTRATED PURPOSES, verses 6-8. Paul and Silas and Timothy went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, thus carrying out their intention of visiting the churches which Paul had founded on his First Missionary Journey. They planned to go on into the province of Asia on the Ægean Sea. It seemed a most promising field. Here were Ephesus and Smyrna and Laodicea and other teeming cities—great centers of idolatrous worship. Surely they had planned wisely in seeking to win these great centers for Christ. But their plan was frustrated. Without note or comment Luke adds these arresting words: "They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit." "Wherefore they were forbidden he does not say," Chrysostom observes, "but that they were forbidden he does say—teaching us to obey and not ask questions." By a vision or by an inward impression, they were convinced that this was not God's purpose for them.

"What to others are disappointments, are to believers intimations of the way and will of God" (John Newton).

In his Bible opposite the verse in Proverbs which reads, "The steps of a good man are ordered by Jehovah," George Müller wrote, "And the stops, too!"

When they reached the borders of the province of Mysia, they tried to turn northeastward into Bithynia, the province on the Black Sea. This seemed a promising field of wholly another character. Here was pioneer work to be done. Here the people were uncivilized and ignorant, and sadly in need of a missionary. But here, too, the way was closed for them. Here again the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, restrained them. There were obstacles in the way that were insurmountable.

"However difficult it may be to see the gleam leading on through the gloom, it is never difficult, on looking back, to see that we have been led. Sir W. Robertson Nicoll affirms that very few old men look back with regret upon the decisions that they made at the crises of their careers. 'The meaning of that is,' he adds significantly, 'that we are not left so much to our own wisdom as we think. All unconsciously to ourselves we have been guided'" (F. H. Boreham).

Still headed westward, they "passed by" Mysia in the sense that they did not stop to preach as they traversed this province, and came to Troas on the Sea.

II. THE CALL OF THE WEST, verses 9, 10. As Paul walked the streets of Troas, which was the gateway to Europe, he must have seen more than one man from Macedonia who seemed to him the incarnation of the needs of that district, nay, rather of the whole of Europe.

It could not be that this was the first time the thought had come to him that he must go over and possess the land. He must have stood in the harbor peering out to the distant islands that fringe the coast of Macedonia, and must have longed to conquer that world for Christ. And in the night the vision came; he seemed to see

a man of Macedonia standing and beseeching him to "Come over into Macedonia and help us." "There was that mighty power which has been called 'the urge of God' acting upon a soul ready to obey the divine behest to the uttermost."

"And so it is that before every well-done work the vision comes. We dream before we accomplish. We start with the glorified image of what we are to do shining before our eyes, and it is its splendor that encourages and entices us through all the drudgery of the labor that we meet. In all our boyhood, that comes before our life, and thinks and pictures to itself what life shall be, that fancies and resolves and is impatient,—what is it but just the vision before the work, the dream of Europe coming to many a young life, as it sleeps at Troas, on the margin of the sea? The visions before the work; it is their strength which conquers the difficulties, and lifts men up out of the failures, and redeems the tawdriness or squalidness of the labor that succeeds" (Phillips Brooks).

And believing that God had called them to preach in Macedonia, Paul and the rest at once decided to cross over into the continent of Europe.

"We may well doubt whether, with the infinite difference of personal life and character which God sends into the world, every true and earnest man has not some work that he alone can do, some place that he alone can fill; whether there is not somewhere a demand that he alone can satisfy; whether the world does not need him, is not calling to him, 'Come and help us'" (Phillips Brooks).

Note that in this tenth verse we have the first use in Acts of the personal pronoun *we,* showing that Luke, the writer of the history, was one of the company. Until now he had been writing as an historian, giving the narrative in the third person; now he writes as an eyewitness.

III. THE JOURNEY, verses 11, 12. Sailing from Troas they went to the island of Samothrace, and then sailed on to Neapolis. Proceeding nine miles inland they came to Philippi, a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony, where they tarried several days. As Professor Ramsay tells us, there was keen competition among the cities for the title of first of the province, or first of the district. Every city which could pretend to the first place in respect of any qualification called itself first, and aroused the jealousy of other cities which counted themselves equally good—a state of affairs which we can have no difficulty in understanding!

IV. THE FIRST CONVERT IN EUROPE, verses 13-15. Had there been a synagogue at Philippi, Paul and his companions would have gone there on their first Sabbath. They went to the riverside, hoping to find a group of Jews met for prayer, for it was customary to meet by a river when a synagogue was lacking. He found several women, and spoke to them about Jesus.

"What was this Macedonia and this Europe which the man in the vision represented? Did it want the gospel? Had it sent for him because it was restless and craving and uneasy, and could not be satisfied until it heard the truth about Jesus Christ, which Paul of Tarsus had to tell? Nothing of the kind whatsoever. Europe was going on perfectly contented in its heathenism. As far as we know, there was not one man in Macedonia who wanted Paul. When he went over there the next day, he found what? A few bigoted Jews, some crazy soothsayers and witches, multitudes of indifferent heathen, a few open-hearted men and women who heard and believed what he had to tell them; but not one who had believed before, or wanted to believe—not one who met him at the ship and said, 'Come, we have waited for you; we sent for you; we want your help.'

"Who then sent the man from Macedonia? Ah! there is just the key to it. God sent him. Not the Macedonians themselves. They did not want the gospel. God sent him, because he saw that they needed the gospel. The mysterious man was an utterance, not of the conscious want, but of the unconscious need of those people" (Phillips Brooks).

"How noble and touching is the picture which this gives us of God! The unconscious needs of the world are all appeals and cries to him. Wherever a nation is sunk in slavery or barbarism it cannot be so perfectly contented with its chains but that he hears the soul of it crying out after liberty and civilization. Wherever a man or a body of men is given to bigotry and prejudice, the love of darkness cannot be so complete but that he hears the human heart begging for the light that it was made for. Think what the world would be if men were like God in this respect!" (Phillips Brooks).

One of the women at the riverside was Lydia, from Thyatira, a seller of purple, a Jewish proselyte. Thyatira, like the Lydian land in general, was famous for its dyeing; and its guild of dyers is known from the inscriptions. "Lydia sold the purple-dyed garments from Thyatira in Philippi; and she had, no doubt, a regular connection with a firm in her native city, whose agent she was. In ancient times, many kinds of garments were woven in their perfect shape, and there was much less cutting and sewing of cloth than in the present day. Lydia, of course, sold also the less expensive kinds of garments; but she takes her trade-name from the finest class of her wares, indicating that she was a first-class dealer. She must have possessed a considerable amount of capital to trade in such articles. As her husband is not mentioned, and she was a householder, she was probably a widow; and she may be taken as an ordinary example of the freedom with which women lived and worked both in Asia Minor and Macedonia" (W. M. Ramsay). The purple dye was obtained from two mollusca, and was applied to all colors ranging from deep red to violet, which indicated great luxury and distinction on the part of the wearers.

Lydia listened and believed, and then she and all her household were baptized. She besought the missionaries to make her house their headquarters, and her entreaty prevailed, her house becoming the first church in Europe, verse 40. This has been called the first instance of the hospitality which was afterwards so characteristic of the early church; 1. Pet. 4.9; Rom. 19.3; 1 Tim. 5.10; 3 John 5. Lydia's hospitality was not fitful: see Acts 16.40.

Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.—Hebrews.

"*Lydia* was an alert, progressive woman of her time. She had resolute courage. She might have seriously injured her trade in dyes by accepting this "new religion," but she had no scruples about facing such a possible result. She was not afraid of social criticism. With the gracious words and humility of a true gentlewoman, she extended the hospitality of her home to Paul and Silas. To Paul this woman must have given congenial companionship. She was widely traveled, and alert and interesting. At the same time she had a strange spiritual insight. She resembles in many ways the modern woman of ambition and efficiency. She was proud to be a wage-earner; she was proud to be a hostess and a friend to men of religious purposes. She was faithful to older forms of worship, yet open-minded to new preaching, making her decisions with courage and spiritual progress" (Annie Russell Marble).

"We are told sometimes today that the Church is full of women, that there are no men going to Church. I contradict the statement whenever I hear it made. But the measure in which it is true is the condemnation of men; and let the men who are becoming Christless and churchless lament if the hour ever should come when the women cease to worship" (Dr. G. Campbell Morgan).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What did Peter see in a vision the day that Cornelius sent for him? What lesson did Peter thereby learn? Who started with Paul on his Second Missionary Journey?

The Importance of Paul's Invasion of Europe. It was a moment fraught with immense importance when Paul crossed from Troas in Asia to Neapolis in Europe. "No one could have guessed that this little advance guard of seven represented a greater kingdom than that which Xerxes represented when he invaded Europe, though he brought together the armies of forty-six nations to contend against Greece, constructed a canal for his ships to ride upon, and flung a bridge across the Hellespont, over which his soldiers marched incessantly for seven days and nights. The picture of the magnificent Xerxes seated on his throne of gold watching the tremendous disaster of the battle of Salamis, fades away with the years; so, also, does the glory of the victories of the Roman Augustus; but the King whom Paul came to Europe to herald forth rises still to greater and greater power."

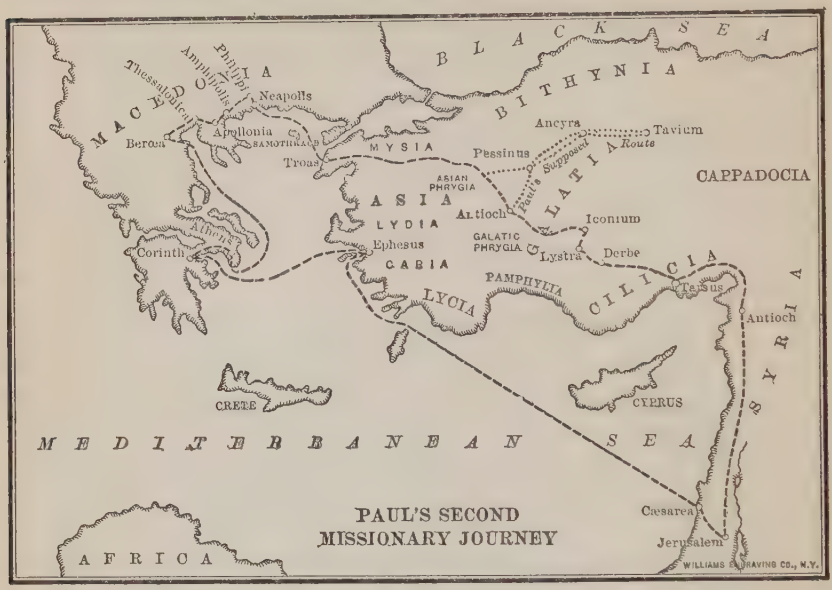
For the Blackboard. To your record for Lesson VI add: Provinces of Phrygia and Galatia, Troas, Island of Samothrace, Neapolis, Philippi.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Antioch in Syria to Tarsus, over the Taurus Mountains to Derbe and on to Lystra, westward through South Galatia (the districts of Phrygia and Pisidia, where

were Antioch and Iconium)—all this was familiar ground which Paul traversed. (According to the older view, the words "They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia" mean that they turned northeastward, as far as Ancyra and Tavium in Northern Galatia and founded the churches to which Paul wrote his Epistle to the Galatians. Such a work would have taken weeks or months, and in that case it is most strange that Luke does not mention it. The dotted lines on the map indicate this route.)

Asia, as we have already learned, was the Roman province by that name which included the three districts of Mysia, Lydia, and Caria along the Ægean Sea. When



Paul reached Asia, and felt forbidden to preach in that province, he started northward, intending to enter the province of Bithynia, which extended along the southern shore of the Black Sea. It lay just across the Bosphorus from the site of the modern city of Constantinople. Here his plans were again changed, and he crossed Mysia to Troas on the Ægean.

At Troas Paul was but three or four miles from the site of ancient Troy, where Dr. Schliemann unearthed such ancient treasures. Recall Troy in the lore of Homer and Vergil, the city of Priam, the home of the beautiful Helen, around whose walls Achilles chased Hector, where the cunning Greeks played off the wooden horse upon the Trojans. Troas was an attractive, populous city in Paul's day. Today the ground is strewn with carvings, mouldings, and pedestals in marble, some of which have inscriptions in the Greek language.

In two days' time Paul and his company sailed from Troas to the island of Samothrace, and then on to Neapolis in the Roman province of Macedonia. Neapolis, where Paul landed on European soil, is now called Kavalla. It has a beautiful harbor, and fine arches remain of the Roman acqueduct of Paul's day.

From Neapolis to Philippi was nine or ten miles. Philippi lay on the great marble-paved Egnatian Road which united Italy across Greece with Asia, and was a great commercial city. Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, had founded the city. Shakespeare in Julius Cæsar has immortalized the Plains of Philippi, where ninety years before Paul's time (48 B.C.), Brutus and Cassius fought with Octavius and Mark Antony for the liberty of the world and were defeated. Here the Roman Empire had its rise with Augustus Cæsar (Octavius) as its first Emperor. In honor of the victory the city of Philippi was made a Roman Colony with the full title of *Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensi*. A "Colony" was really a bit of Rome on foreign soil: its people had all the privileges of Roman citizenship.

Philippi was the first city in Europe where Paul preached. Today the riverside is

still attractive, but only a few Turkish huts and ruins of two gateways supposed to date from the Emperor Claudius mark the site of the Philippi that Paul knew.

Thyatira, the city whence Lydia came, was in the province of Asia, half-way between the Hermus and Caicus rivers. It seems to have had more trade-guilds than any other city of Asia: wool-workers, linen-workers, leather-workers, dyers, tanners, etc.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"I can't get interested in missions!" a young girl exclaimed as she left a missionary meeting with an older companion.

"No, dear, it isn't to be expected you should—yet awhile," came the surprising response. "It's just like getting interest in a bank; you have to put in a little something first; and the more you put in, the more interest. Time or money or praying, it doesn't matter which, but something you have to put in, or you never *will* have any interest. Try it—just put in a little something, and you're sure of the interest."

The Island of Samothrace

It is your special privilege throughout these lessons from The Acts to enlist your pupils' interest in missions by getting them to put something into the work.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE HAND OF GOD IN MISSIONS

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with The Text Explained.

The Hand of God in Paul's Course. Paul gave up his plan to enter a province, and God gave him a continent. Europe was even then taking the right of the line. Rome ruled the world, and Rome was in Europe. The two leading literatures of that day were the Greek and the Latin, and they were both European. The wealth of the world was rapidly flowing to those cities on the other side of the Mediterranean because the European countries were taking the lead in commerce and trade.

Victors in the Famous Battle of Philippi
Octavius and Antony on the left; Lepidus on the right

Here to the west was that continent which for two thousand years should exercise a dominant influence upon the life of the whole race, such as Asia in all that period never approached. It was worth while to upset this man's plans of entering Bithynia. It was worth while to cut across the grain of his own wish and expectation in order to set the feet of a mighty apostle upon the continent of Europe. His lips were opened upon the ears of Europe as he proclaimed the gospel of the Son of God. He assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered him not, and passing by Mysia he came to Troas and on to Europe.

He scarcely knew what he was saying when he ascribed this change of plan to the action of the divine spirit. His action, however, has received abundant justification at the hands of recorded history. Under the moral power of that gospel which he carried that day across the Ægean, Europe has gained a clear ascendancy over all the other continents of the world in the development and in the expression of Christian impulse. The sublimest manifestations of Christian sentiment we know in Christian art and in Christian architecture, in Christian music and in Christian literature, have come, not from Asia, where Christianity was born, but from Europe, where Paul and his fellow-missionaries carried their gospel that day when they crossed from Troas to Macedonia.

The great Christian cathedrals—Cologne and Milan, St. Peter's and Notre Dame, Durham, York and Canterbury—are all in Europe; there is nothing to match them in Asia. The Madonnas and Transfigurations, the Crucifixions and Ascensions, which adorn the great galleries, were all painted in Europe. The sublime oratorios, Elijah and Saint Paul, the Stabat Mater and the Messiah, which lift the souls of men heavenward, were all composed in Europe. The great Christian epics of Dante and Milton, the In Memoriam of Tennyson, and the noble Christian poems of Browning were all written on the continent of Europe. It was the fate of a soul, and that soul the soul of the continent, the soul of a mighty, enduring civilization, which Paul bore with him that day when he suffered that interruption of his plans. He was turned by the spirit of God from a lovely little province into a broad continent of moral opportunity.—Dr. Charles R. Brown, in The Quest of Life.

Other Missionaries who were Forbidden of the Holy Spirit to Speak the Word in Certain Lands. In the summer of 1812 Adoniram Judson reached Calcutta, burning with zeal to preach the gospel in India. There he was told that the British in India would not tolerate any interference with the religion of the people and he could not proceed. In his disappointment he went to the Isle of Frane for a short stay, and then made an effort to land at Madras. There also he was turned away. As a last resort he went to Burma where, under divine guidance, he was led to the Karens. You know the result of his work. The Karens had been prepared for his coming, for generations they had repeated the tradition that white teachers would come to tell them of the Book of God, their hearts were fruitful soil, whereas but stony ground in his Bithynia would have received his message.

Listening to the Call for Help

Livingstone's travels were full of instances of times when he was prevented, sometimes by the Boers, sometimes by floods, from doing this or that, and he recognized afterwards that these were the means by which God had ordered his steps. "When he reached St. Paul de Loanda, after having been lost to knowledge for over two years, he was greatly tempted to go back to England in the Forerunner, a mail steamer which called on her way home. But 'the Spirit suffered him not.' He had to take his Makololo carriers back to their homes, and without hearing from wife and family he turned inland again. On her way home the Forerunner was lost with practically all on board."

Carey planned to evangelize the South Seas, but his field proved to be India.

The Reason for Some Broken Plans. You may have the door shut in your face with a slam. And it may be done to turn your mind away from petty, meager success into something that has dimensions and content. You can afford to let Bithynia go if God is granting you instead a great section of Europe.

Here is a young fellow who thinks he will go into business and make a lot of money, or into law, or medicine, or engineering. Either line will offer him an attractive career—as attractive as Bithynia. But there is no complaint in the world of commerce that there are not men enough there to do the business of the world. The lawyers are not passing resolutions to the effect that there are not lawyers enough to attend to the legal business of the world. When we ride through the streets and see the doctors' signs, we feel that there are physicians enough to take care of the sick people.

But there is a calling where there are not enough of men with energy and good sense, with warm sympathy and genuine character, to furnish spiritual leadership in the work of the ministry. From every State of the Union and from every branch of the Church there comes a call for more men of the right sort to enter the ministry. It may be that something will occur to change your plan. If the Spirit should not allow you to enter any of those other professions and should turn your thought and determination to the ministry of Christ you would feel that among all the good things

of life God had given you the best. You would feel that you had surrendered a province, in order to possess a continent of opportunity.

We may still encounter difficulties, even when our plans are changed by the Spirit of God. It was so with Paul. You remember what occurred when he crossed the Ægean to help that beseeching man in Macedonia. He did not find any beseeching man. He did not find Europe so eager for the gospel that it could not sleep nights. He found a few bigoted Jews who persecuted him; some half-crazy soothsayers and spiritualists who annoyed him; and some Roman officials who put him in prison. He crossed the Ægean, his face shining and his heart leaping for joy because of the vision he had seen, but before the chapter ends he was in jail. That was what he actually found when his plan for Bithynia went down in defeat and he took a new course.

Nevertheless, his vision was sound to the core. Read on! Read on and you will hear him chanting his hymn of praise as he moves ahead in his Christian work on that continent of Europe. "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear, that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus."

The one great thing is to keep your heart sensitive so that you will feel the motions of the Spirit. Keep your heart sensitive to the divine Spirit by right thinking and honest living so that he will be able to turn you here or there as he sees best. Then you may be sure that he will take you forth upon a continent of spiritual opportunity where you will see and do and become all that belongs to the larger life of the children of God.—Condensed from The Quest of Life, by Dr. Charles R. Brown.

How Alpheus Hardy's Plans Were Frustrated. I am not a college man, and it was the bitter disappointment of my life that I could not be one. I wanted to go to college and become a minister; so I went to Phillips Academy to prepare for the work. My health broke down, and, in spite of my determined hope of being able to go on, at last the truth was forced on me that I could not. To tell my disappointment is impossible. It seemed as if all my hope and purpose in life were defeated. "I cannot be God's minister," was the sentence that kept rolling through my mind. When that fact at last became certain to me, one morning alone in my room, my distress was so great that I threw myself flat on the floor. The voiceless cry of my soul was, "O God, I cannot be thy minister!" Then there came to me as I lay a vision, a new hope, a perception that I could serve God in business with the same devotion as in preaching, and that to make money for God might be my sacred calling. The vision of this service, and its nature as a sacred ministry, were so clear and joyous that I rose to my feet, and, with new hope in my heart, exclaimed aloud, "O God, I can be thy minister! I will go back to Boston. I will make money for God, and that shall be my ministry!" From that time I have felt myself as much appointed and ordained to make money for God as if I had been permitted to carry out my own plan and been ordained to preach the gospel. I am God's man, and the ministry to which God has called me is to make and administer money for him.

Hindered Volunteers. This phrase refers to those young men and women who signed the Student Volunteer declaration for foreign mission work, and have been prevented by health or other circumstances from going to foreign fields. Such a "hindered volunteer" was Alpheus Hardy, though not a college man.

A recent Hindered Volunteer, who was rejected by the Committee because of his health, has this year sent to the missionary society his check for fifteen thousand dollars which will cover the cost of ten men in foreign service.

Not My Will.

Yet this one thing I learn to know
Each day more surely as I go,
That doors are opened, ways are made,
Burdens are lifted or are laid,
By some great law unseen and still.
"Not as I will."—Helen Hunt Jackson.

For Discussion. 1. Paul's trustfulness. See Chapter XXI of The Character of Jesus, by Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

2. Paul's Attitude toward women. The church began in a woman's prayer meeting. Its first member was a business woman. Jesus was woman's best friend. This is admitted. Paul's attitude toward women was friendly, though I suppose he is more misunderstood in this respect than in any other. He credited Eunice and Lois with the superb training of his co-laborer Timothy. He entrusted Phoebe with a difficult

mission to Rome. He admired and praised Priscilla, and never mentioned her husband without her. He recognized woman as man's equal in Christ.—Dr. George W. McDaniel.

3. Lydia's hospitality. Are we losing the grace of hospitality? Have changed domestic conditions made it necessary to be inhospitable?

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did the jailer attempt to kill himself? 2. What famous Roman committed suicide at Philippi? 3. Is suicide ever justifiable? 4. Why did Paul insist on being honorably dismissed? 5. Should a Christian overlook injustices?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE MACEDONIAN CALL AND WHAT IT LED TO

Beginning the Lesson. There is an inscription at the base of a fountain in Enterprise, Alabama, which reads:

In Profound Appreciation
Of the Boll Weevil
And What it Has Done
As the Herald of Prosperity
This Monument is Erected
By the Citizens of
Enterprise, Coffee County, Alabama.

The boll weevil, you know, destroys the cotton crop and has been a great scourge in the South. It seems strange to have a fountain dedicated to such a pest, and have the pest called a herald of prosperity! Yet such it actually proved to be for the people of Enterprise, Coffee County, Alabama. They found they could not raise cotton. In despair they turned to the raising of corn, sugar cane, hay, sweet potatoes, cattle and hogs. The peanut crop alone now brings in as much money as all their cotton crop ever did, and with the other products they are far more prosperous than ever before. The boll weevil was actually a blessing to them.

It has happened in countless lives that an evil has turned out to be a blessing. Robert Schumann, the great composer, in early life had no thought of composing music. His great ambition was to become a wonderful player. He contrived a machine to strengthen his fingers with the result that ligaments were broken and he could not play at all. Then it was that he turned his attention to the composition of music and created his beautiful symphonies.

God had his plan for Paul and it was different from the plan Paul made. What was Paul's plan? How was he prevented from carrying it out?

How to Know the Will of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it almost seems as though Paul and Silas and the great leaders in the Early Church were guided by God in a special way, that they had some means of knowing God's will which we have not. And yet this is not so. They were guided by God's voice within. We all have a consciousness of what we ought to do, and this *ought* is the Spirit of God guiding us.

God has revealed his will in his Word, especially in the life and teachings of his Son. If we act in accordance with the principles which he taught, our decisions will be in harmony with God's purposes for us.

In Asia and in Bithynia Paul was led by the Spirit of God by means of some hindrance, some combination of circumstances that could not be overcome. The way was closed to him. In that way we are sometimes led.

President Lincoln believed implicitly that doors were opened or closed for him as God willed. "The Almighty does make use of human agencies and directly intervenes in human affairs," he declared. "I have had so many evidences of his direction, so many instances where I have been controlled by some other Power than my own will, that I cannot doubt that this Power comes from above. I am confident that when the Almighty wants me to do, or not to do, a particular thing, he finds a way of letting me know it."

The Need is God's Call. A vision of need has inspired and impelled all the great missionaries of the world. William Carey said his call came to him from an open Bible before an open map of the world. When a friend of George Augustus Selwyn was asked why the latter had gone to New Zealand, he replied: "Perhaps

He hears a Voice you cannot hear,
Which will not let him stay,
He sees a Hand you cannot see
That beckons him away!"

The Call of the Fair-Haired Angels to Gregory the Great. It was a long, long time ago—thirteen hundred years, and five hundred years after Paul and his friends crossed to Macedonia. That country had long been converted. So had the regions beyond it. The gospel had won its way right across the continent of Europe. In fact, the whole Roman Empire had become Christian. But beyond the empire, across a narrow sea, there lay a country whose people were still heathen. They worshiped the sun and moon and some gods with strange names, Tiw, Woden, and Thor, and a goddess called Frigga.

They were a strong and fierce people, and the Christian inhabitants of the nearest parts of the empire had nothing to do with them. But there was one man to whom the vision came of carrying the gospel to those benighted people. He was a Christian minister; he lived in the city of Rome and his name was Gregory. He seemed to see them appealing to him—like the man of Macedonia to Paul—and saying, "Come over and help us." This is how it happened. He went one day into the market-place of Rome, and noticed three strange-looking youths exposed for sale as slaves. He was much struck by their strength and beauty, for they were well and sturdily built, with fair skins, blue eyes and golden hair. Gregory asked where they came from, and was told. It was the heathen country of which we are speaking. "What is their nation called?" "Angles." "That is well called," he cried. "They have the face of angels, and are meet to share with the angels in heaven. What is the name of their province?" "It is called Deira." "That also is well called," said Gregory. "*De ira*—from the wrath of God—they shall be rescued. Who is their king?" "Ælle." "Alleluia!" he shouted. "Their land shall sing the praise of God their Maker." And that is how Gregory heard the call from the heathen land, and resolved to answer it.

Come Over and Help Us!

But, to his great disappointment, he found difficulties in his way. He was not able to go himself with the gospel, as he had intended. The Pope would not allow him to leave Rome, saying he could not be spared. But he never forgot his vision, and waited for God to open the way for its fulfilment. In the course of a few years he himself became Pope. This meant that, though he could not personally go with the gospel to that heathen country, he had the power to send others. And he did so. He sent a band of forty missionaries, under a leader named Augustine, and with very full and careful instructions. And God went with them, and opened the heathen people's hearts to receive the gospel. Soon that dark land became Christian,—and it has been becoming more and more Christian, thank God, ever since.

And now do you know the name of that heathen country? Why, England, of course. It was England that lay outside the Roman Empire, and outside Christendom in lonely ignorance and heathen darkness. It was our forefathers who drew the Christian pity of Gregory, and caused him to send missionaries to them. Surely, if any people ought to sympathize with those who are still heathen, we are the people. And if any people ought to send the gospel to the heathen, and to make sacrifices to do so, we are the people.—Condensed from a Sermon by Benjamin J. Gibbon.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. To know the need should prompt the deed. —Mary Lyon.

Boys and girls must keep their ears open and their hearts open to hear what God has to say to them, to see what he has done for them, and to find out where they can lend a hand.—Edward Everett Hale.

God needs every man for some plan.—Dr. S. D. Gordon.

Nothing makes a man strong like a call on him for help.—Dr. F. W. Farrar.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did the jailor wish to kill himself? 2. When Peter escaped from prison, what was done to the prison guards? (Acts 12-19). 3. Look up Longfellow's words about this event in his poem entitled The Slave Singing at Midnight. 4. Find a reference to this event in Whittier's poem entitled Cassandra Southwick.

LESSON IX—AUGUST 30

PAUL AND THE PHILIPPIAN JAILOR

GOLDEN TEXT: Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved. Acts 16.31

LESSON Acts 16.16-40 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 40.1-5, 11-13

ACTS 16.19 But when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they laid hold on Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers, 20 and when they had brought them unto the magistrates, they said, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, 21 and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans. 22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent their garments off them, and commanded to beat them with rods. 23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: 24 who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. 25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened; and every one's bands were loosed. 27 And the jailor, being roused out of sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 29 And he called for lights and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. 32 And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately. 34 And he brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE SOOTHSAYING MAID OF PHILIPPI, verses 16-18. Some time after coming to Philippi, as Paul and his companions went to the place of prayer where he was wont to preach, he was annoyed by a fortune-telling maid who kept crying out after them. Her monotonous chant disturbed him, and drew an uncomfortable crowd of curiosity seekers. Day after day she cried, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaimed unto you the way of salvation." In the margin of the Revised Version the alternative translation for "a soothsaying maid" given is "a maid having a spirit, a Python." The great dragon at Delphi slain by Apollo was called a Python, and according to Plutarch so also at this time was a ventriloquist. Dr. Ramsay says that "God the Highest" was a widespread pagan expression, and "salvation" was the object of many vows and prayers to the gods. He further says that the slave girl's mind became distorted and diseased by her belief in her supernatural possession, but it became all the more acute in certain perceptions and intuitions, and she became at once alive to the moral influence which the intense faith of the strangers gave them.

Paul in the name of Jesus Christ bade the spirit leave her. And she was freed. "Paul's power over her was not necessarily miraculous; it was that of a good man over a sensitive nature. This slave girl became the second Christian convert in Philippi and led up to another conversion equally strange."

II. PAUL AND SILAS ACCUSED BY THE ANGRY MASTERS OF THE MAID, verses 19.21. The maid had lost her faith in herself and with it her power to speak as formerly. The people no longer believed in her, and her masters saw that they could get no more money through her. The angry men seized Paul and Silas and dragged them before the rulers.

"The most sensitive part of civilized man is his pocket" (Professor Ramsay).

The rulers were holding forth in the market-place, the public square where business was conducted and justice was administered. Every Roman Colony had two chief magistrates, or prætors, as they were called.

"These men being Jews," so the charge of the slave-owners began (for the Romans held Jews in great contempt, and the Emperor Claudius had recently banished Jews from Rome) "do exceedingly trouble our city, and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans." This was not their real reason, of course, but it would never have done to complain to the magistrates that their gains were gone. "He would have told them their gains were illicit. So they

brought forth their high-sounding plea. What splendid patriotism! What a shock to all right-thinking people the conduct of Paul and Silas was!" (R. Bruce Taylor). (Yet the false reason was a true one, for if the Romans believed Paul's message they would turn from their worship of idols and of the Emperor.)

"This same struggle between the alleged and the real motive still goes on. No one ever returns to England or Scotland after a sojourn abroad without being struck and distressed by the appalling drunkenness," a well-known Britisher writes. "And yet," he adds, "when temperance legislation is proposed, think of the kind of patriotic cry that is raised. 'This is a blow at the liberty of the subject.' 'Why should the working man not have his beer?' The real motive for the outcry is that the pockets of the liquor-sellers are touched, and the holders of brewery shares stand a chance of losing."

III. PAUL AND SILAS BEATEN AND IMPRISONED, verses 22-24. It was unlawful to scourge a Roman citizen, but evidently Paul and Silas were not given a chance to plead their Roman citizenship, for when the multitude rose up together against them, the magistrates ordered them beaten with rods. Paul refers to this scourging in 2 Cor. 11.25. The professional scourgers were called lictors. Their rod consisted of a number of rods bound together. They tore off the garments of their victims, and rained the blows on their bare backs.

Paul and Silas were then cast into prison, and the jailor was charged to keep them safely. The jailor put them in the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. The inner prison may have been underground. The stocks consisted of two heavy beams, one upon the other: the upper beam was lifted and after the prisoner's ankles were put across two depressions in the lower beam, it was let down and fastened. It was impossible to draw the foot through.

IV. THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH: SONGS FOLLOW SCOURGING, verse 25. Paul and Silas were in great pain from their lacerated backs and the cramped position which they had to maintain, yet midnight found them praying and singing hymns unto God. "Night was the usual time for Christian worship, and perhaps these midnight 'lauds' represent the apostles' customary practice. See Ps. 119.62" (Rackham). "Their legs in the stocks pained them not, whose souls were in Heaven" (Tertullian). And the prisoners were listening to them. Their faith made them victors over their fate.

"Difficulty made the disciples radiant, joyous, triumphant. Would that the Church of this age could catch the spirit of those men of the Book of Acts. They were lashed with thongs in the common jail; they were stoned. Yet there was no minor key in their songs; there were no funereal sentiments. They lived in spiritual gaiety, while their hymns converted even the jail keeper. Men instead of pitying them envied them, and were astounded at the perpetual buoyancy of their souls. What was it? It was the Spirit of God plus difficulty, which opened up the fountains of the deep in them" (John Douglas Adam).

V. THE RELEASE, verse 26. Suddenly an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, opening all the doors, and loosing every man's chains. This seems incredible to one who thinks of doors like those in our prison and of handcuffed prisoners. "Any one who has seen a Turkish prison will not wonder that the doors were thrown open; each door was merely closed by a bar, and the earthquake, as it passed along the ground, forced the doorposts apart from each other so that the bar slipped from its hold, and the door swung open. The prisoners were fastened to the wall or in wooden stocks; and the chains and stocks were detached from the wall, which was shaken so that spaces gapped between the stones. An earthquake behaves sometimes like a playful, good-natured sprite, when it spares its full terrors."

VI. THE CONVICTED JAILOR, verses 27-34. It was at Philippi that Cassius, defeated, covered his face and ordered his freedmen to strike the blow with his own sword, exclaiming, "Cæsar, thou art avenged, even with the sword that killed thee." His messenger Titinius held it to be "a Roman's part" to follow the stern example. Here Brutus, "The noblest Roman of them all," killed himself by running upon his own sword. And here the jailor of Paul almost committed suicide in the same way. He was responsible for his prisoners, and disgrace and death would have been his punishment had they escaped. Suicide under such circumstances was regarded a Roman virtue: compare Acts 12.19. Aroused out of sleep and seeing the prison door open, the jailor jumped to the conclusion that his prisoners had escaped, and he

was about to kill himself when Paul's voice stopped him. "It was midnight, and dark: how could Paul from the inner prison see that the jailor was going to kill himself? We must understand that the inner prison was a small cell, which had no window and no opening except into the outer and larger prison, and that the outer prison had one large door in the opposite wall; then, if there was any faint starlight in the sky, still more if the moon was up, a person in the outer doorway would be distinguishable to one whose eyes were accustomed to the darkness, but the jailor would see only black darkness in the prison" (Professor Ramsay).

"Do thyself no harm," Paul cried, "for we are all here." Why had not the other prisoners made their escape? "An earthquake strikes panic into the semi-Oriental mob in the Ægean lands, and it seems to me quite natural that the prisoners made no dash for safety when the opportunity was afforded them. Moreover, they were still only partially free, and they had only a moment for action. The jailor was aroused by the earthquake and came to the outer door; he was perhaps a soldier or at least had something of Roman discipline, giving him presence of mind: his call for lights brought police who helped to guard the prisoners, and the opportunity was lost" (Professor Ramsay).

Calling for lights, the jailor sprang into the prison and fell down before Paul and Silas, in trembling and fear. Recall that time in Paul's life when he, too, had fallen to the earth trembling and astonished, Acts 9.4,6. The jailor saw in the earthquake the hand of God, and in these two men the messengers of God, whom he himself had cruelly treated: What must he do to make their God his God? "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" he cried, as he brought Paul and Silas out of the prison. And Paul and Silas answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house."

We are accepted of God not because of what we have done, but because of what he has done (John 3.16).

And they spoke the word of the Lord unto them, with all that were in his house.

"What is the opening of a prison door compared with the miracle of setting men's souls free?"

The jailor washed the stripes which Paul and Silas had received, cleansing them from blood at the prison fountain or reservoir, and then he and his household were baptized. "The waters of baptism washed the jailor from deeper stains and more grievous wounds than those of the lictors' rods" (Chrysostom).

The jailor brought Paul and Silas unto his house and gave them food, and greatly rejoiced, having believed in God.

"This is sudden conversion indeed, but danger and surprise discover the depths of a man's soul. A man of this elemental type, in such an experience, comes simply to God, if he comes at all. There were soldiers in the Great War who awakened to God and welcomed God's mercy, in just this fashion. It is not the only way into the great experience, but it is one way" (R. C. Gillie).

VI. THE PUBLIC ACQUITTAL, verses 35-40. Like the jailor, the magistrates connected the earthquake with Paul and Silas and sent word to have the jailor release them. When informed of this, Paul indignantly exclaimed, "Let them come themselves and bring us out!" He and Silas had been publicly beaten; they will not be privately released. They have been punished uncondemned; they will not be sent away unacquitted. Moreover, they are Roman citizens, "It is a misdeed to bind a Roman citizen—a crime to scourge him—almost parricide to put him to death," said Cicero. It was about this time that the city of Rhodes was deprived of its freedom by Claudius, because there certain Roman citizens were put to death. When Paul's words were reported to the magistrates they trembled. Humbly they came and besought Paul and Silas to leave the city. Thus, not as fugitives from justice, but publicly acquitted, Paul and Silas left the prison, and after tarrying awhile with the church at Lydia's home they left Philippi.

When Paul demanded public release he maintained his civil right in the face of outrage, and set an example that a good many pusillanimous Christians will do well to consider and imitate. They brood over the passive side of duty until they exaggerate it, and appear to the world as wanting in manliness. No one thought the less of these injured disciples for asserting their rights; they were thought of all the more respectfully as citizens with whom no liberty was to be taken. The passive side of duty is often sublime; but

self-respect, social right, international justice, cannot be lightly disregarded. Writers like Nietzsche who taunt Christians as being destitute of manliness, men in whom the heroic temper has died out, derive much of their plausibility from the mistaken habit of pious men in failing duly to assert themselves. The godly ought to be men of courage; whilst discriminating, resolute in all righteousness. We are not most like Christ when we allow ourselves to be trampled upon. "Quit you like men; be strong. No false meekness. It is a grave fault in a good man to allow injustice, even to himself" (Dr. W. L. Watkinson).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What persecution had Paul suffered at Antioch of Pisidia? At Iconium? At Lystra? When the people of Jerusalem were "pricked in their hearts" after Peter's sermon and cried, "What shall we do?" what did Peter say?

Paul and Silas at Philippi. Of the work at Philippi, of the converts made, of Timothy's zeal, who served with Paul as a son with a father in furthering the gospel, of Silas and Luke and Clement and Epaphroditus, of Euodia and Syntyche, those women whom Paul remembers gratefully for their labors,—of all these we get glimpses in Paul's letter to the Philippians, but of this Luke tells us nothing; instead he hastens on to narrate the event which led to Paul's expulsion from the city.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Religious education, in all its many varied forms, stands in great need of balance. Those who direct its policies and programs have no right to exclude any instruction or stimulus that will result in the making of character. I do not doubt for one moment that great injury, the fruit of which we are now reaping, has been done by those who, carried away by the enthusiasm of exhortation, give to young souls a terrible picture of sin, a fear-inspired desire for repentance, and a concept of salvation that meant little more than escape from punishment. And neither do I doubt that great injury, the fruit of which we are beginning to harvest, has been done by those who have given to young souls no conception of the awful degrading power of sin; have never inspired in them an overwhelming desire for forgiveness that drove them to true repentance; have never given to them any concept whatever of the meaning of salvation. Neither of these is preaching a balanced gospel; neither of these can train or develop the highest, most Christlike character.—Miss Margaret Slattery, in The Church School.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE GOSPEL IN PHILIPPI

Beginning the Lesson. A young missionary in West Africa died at a lonely station from black water fever. Among his papers after his death were found the following lines:

Don't let the song go out of your life;
Though it chance sometimes to flow
In a minor strain; it will blend again
With the major tone you know.

What though shadows rise to obscure life's skies,
And hide for a time the sun,
The sooner they'll lift and reveal the rift,
If you let the melody run.

Don't let the song go out of your life;
Though your voice may have lost its trill,
Though the tremulous note may die in your throat,
Let it sing in your spirit still.

Don't let the song go out of your life;
Let it ring in the soul while here;
And when you go hence, 'twill follow you thence,
And live on in another sphere.

In failing health, far from home and friends, his life seemingly given in vain to the Lord's work, that young missionary could nevertheless bravely sing the Lord's

song in a strange land. He is but one of countless others who have had the heroic heart and the consecrated will of our first great missionary, Paul.

Paul and Silas are singing songs at midnight under most trying circumstances. What were they? (Continue with Text Explained.)

Judson's Prison Experience. Doctor Adoniram Judson, the pioneer missionary to Burma, was thrown into prison when the war broke out in 1824 between Great Britain and Burma. There were about a hundred in the building, which was only forty feet long, had never been cleaned and was ventilated only through cracks.

"We lay there eleven months," wrote Doctor Judson, "nine months in three pairs of fetters and two months in five pairs. The scenes we witnessed and the sufferings we underwent during that period I would fain consign to oblivion. From the death-prison at Ava we were removed to a country prison at Oung-pen-la, ten miles distant, under cricumstances of such severe treatment that one of our number, the Greek, expired on the road, and some of the rest, among them myself, were scarcely able to move for several days. It was the intention of the government in removing us from Ava to have us sacrificed in order to insure victory over the foreigners; but the sudden disgrace and death of the adviser of that measure prevented its execution. I remained in the Oung-pen-la prison six months in one pair of fetters; at the expiration of which period I was taken out of irons, and sent under a strict guard to the Burmese headquarters at Mah-looan, to act as interpreter and translator. Two months more elapsed, and on my return to Ava I was released at the instance of Moung Shwa-loo, the north governor of the palace, and put under his charge. During the six weeks that I resided with him the affairs of the government became desperate, the British troops making steady advances on the capital; and, after Doctor Price had twice been despatched to negotiate for peace (a business which I declined as long as possible), I was taken by force and associated with him. We found the British above Pahgan; and, on returning to Ava with their final terms, I had the happiness of procuring the release of the very last of my fellow-prisoners; and on the twenty-first instant obtained the reluctant consent of the government to my final departure from Ava with Mrs. Judson."

"How the Jailor at Philippi Was Caught." One night in St. Louis, Dwight L. Moody preached on the Philippian jailor, and the next morning the Globe-Democrat reported the sermon under a sensational headline—"How the Jailor at Philippi was Caught." A copy of the paper was carried into the city jail and fell into the hands of a notorious prisoner named Valentine Burke. The result I condense from Mr. Moody's words.

This man was one of the worst characters known to the St. Louis police. He was about forty years old at that time, had spent about twenty years in jail, and was then awaiting trial on another serious charge. As Burke glanced over the morning paper the headline caught his eye. Thinking that it was some jail news, he began to read it. He was so anxious to see how the jailor was caught. He thought he had once passed through a town called Philippi, in Illinois, and supposed this was the place referred to.

Every now and then he came across the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." That text was quoted nine times in the sermon.

Burke wondered what had happened to the Globe-Democrat, and looked at the date. It was that morning's paper all right. He was disgusted, but he could not shake off that text—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." God used it to convict him, and a sense of his responsibility before God rushed upon him. There in his cell at midnight he prayed for the first time in his life. On the following Sunday he talked with the Christian friends who held service in the jail, and was led into the light of the gospel.

From that night Burke was a changed man. For some months after his release he tried to find work, but no one would take him, knowing his past history. He went to New York, but was unsuccessful and returned to St. Louis. One day Burke received a message from the sheriff that he was wanted at the court house. He obeyed with a heavy heart. "Some old case they've got against me," he said; "but if I'm guilty I'll tell them so. I've done lying."

The sheriff greeted him kindly. "Where have you been, Burke?" "In New York." "What have you been doing there?" "Trying to find an honest job." "Have you kept a good grip on the religion you told me about?" inquired the sheriff. "Yes," answered Burke; "I've had a hard time, Sheriff, but I haven't lost my religion."

"Burke," said the sheriff, "I have had you shadowed ever since you left jail. I suspected your religion was a fraud. But I am convinced that you are sincere, as

you've lived an honest life, and I have sent for you to offer you a deputyship under me. You can begin at once."

For Discussion. 1. What is repentance? "Repentance is not a matter of passionate weeping, but of serious thinking." It is not feeling, but willing.

2. "It hurts business": What does this claim often mean today?

3. Should a Christian withstand an injustice to himself?

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the meaning of Phil. 3.7 and 8? 2. Verse 9? 3. Verses 10, 11? 4. Verse 12? 5. Verse 14? 6. Verses 15, 16? 7. Are we responsible for our thoughts—can we control them?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE CONVERSION OF THE JAILOR

Beginning the Lesson. "You will see by the morning paper what the people in China think of the foreign missionary!" These were the words which greeted me one morning in the Pullman (as William A. Brown writes in New Thoughts on an Old Book). A bit of mob violence had been visited upon a mission station.

"Strange as it may seem," I answered, "that is the way the missionaries are usually treated in all lands where they first go to preach the gospel. It is the way they were treated when they first landed on the shores of the continent in which they finally reached and evangelized even our forefathers."

At the mention of our forefathers the traveler said, with quick eagerness, "What is your authority for that, sir?"

"The story is told in a very old book," I answered.

"Where can I get a copy? At the news stand? At the bookstore?"

"I doubt it," I said, "for it is a rather rare book, very old, and not read very much any more."

"Would you mind telling me about it?" he asked.

And as I told him the experiences which befell Paul at Philippi, it was an interesting study to note the transformation which was wrought in the man's face, as for the first time, apparently, he associated the apostolic enterprise with the evangelization of the continent on which our forefathers lived.

Paul's coming to Macedonia was a mistake. So it seems. For what could be more hopeless than his situation, scourged, and cast into an inner prison, his feet in stocks, guards near by? How can the preacher deliver his message? When Paul had seen the vision there at Troas, wrote Luke, "straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them." But had they been divinely led? In their situation, I am sure we should have doubted. Did Paul and Silas? Why had they been scourged, and why were they in prison?

A Midnight Experience in Philippi. As the governor of the Roman prison at Philippi entered his house to take the evening meal, there was a cruel smile still upon his face.

His wife looked up anxiously. "Did I not hear a great commotion outside just now?" she asked. "Has there been any trouble with the prisoners?"

"We have two new birds safe in the cage," said the jailor, the cruel smile still upon his lips, "but they won't do much singing for a bit, I fancy. They've had a stiff beating, and, as I was especially ordered to keep them safe, I've fixed them in the stocks in the inner prison."

"Poor creatures," said the woman, pityingly, "what have they done?"

"They've taken the bread out of better men's mouths," answered her husband. "They are Jews, to begin with, and not wanted in Philippi, for they preach against the gods, saying they are no gods, and they can do naught for us. You know the fortune-telling girl, who has drawn such crowds?"

His wife assented, and the jailor went on: "These men don't approve of fortune-telling, it seems, and they have taken the spirit out of the poor girl, so that she is just like anybody else, and can't tell fortunes any more! So of course she is of no more use to her masters, and they are in a terrible rage! They went to the magistrate about it, and the result is that I have two more prisoners to look after."

The meal ended, the jailor went out to make his final round for the night. When he came back he was more silent than usual. After a time he said slowly: "You know what I said about having the two birds in the cage, and that I reckoned they would not sing for a bit?" "Yes," said his wife.

"Well," after a pause, "they are singing!"

"What!" said the woman, startled, "singing in the prison?" "Singing in the prison, with their feet in the stocks! The other prisoners are all lying awake, listening!" "What are they singing?" asked the woman, curiously. "Some sort of hymn to their God, I fancy," said he. "I stood and listened for a few minutes, but could not make much of it. Something about their God setting prisoners free, and breaking gates of brass, and bars of iron! (Ps. 102 and 107.) But they will hardly get out of our prison, for all their singing!" and he laughed constrainedly. "Let us get to rest, wife; I am tired."

An hour or so later the jailor and his wife awoke to realize that something out of the ordinary was happening. The air was filled with a hollow, rumbling sound, and the floor heaved beneath them as they sprang to their feet. "An earthquake," said the jailor. "I must see to the prisoners!" As he ran the walls cracked and bent, locks and bolts gave way. "The prisoners will have escaped," thought the jailor despairingly, as he saw the open door. "Better die by my own hand than be first disgraced and then slain by order of the court." And he drew his sword with a desperate courage.

"Do thyself no harm!" shouted a clear voice amidst the tumult. "We are all here!"

"Bring a light! A light! Quickly!" cried the relieved jailor to the slaves who had followed him. The light of the torches showed the faces of Paul and Silas calm and serene, while that of the jailor was twisted with fear. Trembling, he fell down before them. "Sirs," he cried, "it is without doubt your God who has opened the prison door. The fortune-telling girl warned us that you were the servants of the Most High God, and could show us the way of salvation. What must I do to be saved?"

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved!" answered the two missionaries.

"Come into my house and tell me more," said the jailor; "but first let me wash your wounds and give you food."

So it came about that the man who had jeered at the pain of the missionaries and added to their sufferings by his own cruel treatment, now waited upon them anxiously and reverently, rejoicing in the good news of the gospel. He and his household were baptized the same night.—Grace Winter, in The Sunday School Chronicle.

The Effect of a Prison Song. Thirty men, red-eyed and disheveled, lined up before a judge of the San Francisco police court. It was the regular morning company of "drunks and disorderlies." Some were old and hardened, others hung their heads in shame. Just as the momentary disorder attending the bringing-in of the prisoners quieted down, a strange thing happened. A strong, clear voice from below began singing:

"Last night, as I lay a-sleeping,
There came a dream so fair."

Last night! It had been for them all a nightmare or a drunken stupor. The song was such a contrast to the horrible fact that no one could fail of a sudden shock at the thought the song suggested.

"I stood in old Jerusalem,
Beside the temple there,"

the song went on. The judge had paused. He made a quiet inquiry. A former member of a famous opera company, known all over the country, was awaiting trial for forgery. It was he who was singing in his cell.

Meantime the song went on, and every man in the line showed emotion. One or two dropped on their knees; one boy at the end of the line, after a desperate effort at self-control, leaned against the wall, buried his face against his folded arms, and sobbed, "O mother, mother!"

The sobs cut to the very heart the men who heard, and the song, still welling its way through the court-room, blended in the hush. At length one man protested. "Judge," said he, "have we got to submit to this? We're here to take our punishment, but this——" He, too, began to sob.

It was impossible to proceed with the business of the court, yet the judge gave no order to stop the song. The police sergeant, after a suppressed effort to keep the men in line, stepped back and waited with the rest. The song moved on to its climax:

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Sing, for the night is o'er!
Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna for evermore!"

In an ecstasy of melody the last words rang out, and then there was silence.

The judge looked into the faces of the men before him. There was not one who was not touched by the song, not one in whom some better impulse was not stirred.

He did not call the cases singly—a kind word of advice, and he dismissed them all. No man was fined or sentenced to the workhouse that morning. The song had done more good than punishment could have accomplished.—The Youth's Companion.

In Season and Out of Season. It seems a strange time to seek the conversion of the jailor. It is after midnight, Paul is suffering greatly from the effects of the beating he has received and from the torture of his long-continued position in the stocks, and he has just survived an earthquake. Don't you think he might be pardoned if he answered the jailor's question by saying, "Let me rest a little while, and in the morning we will discuss the matter?" To answer thus is no temptation to Paul. Nothing gives him such happiness as the opportunity of making his Lord known to an eager listener.

When Paul was writing to Timothy, his "beloved Child," as he called him, he bade him "preach the word, be urgent in season, out of season"—just as he himself had done. Uncle John Vassar, later the founder of Vassar College, was, like Paul, a preacher in season and out of season. When our Civil War began he went to the Federal Army as an agent for the American Tract Society. In the battle that followed he was taken prisoner. When the Southern commander questioned him, he replied:

"I am a colporteur of the American Tract Society, and I try to save the souls of the dear boys that fall around me daily. General, do you love Jesus?"

The commander evaded the question and replied that he knew the Tract Society which had sent him.

"But, my dear General," his prisoner persisted, "do you love Jesus?"

Some one near the commander then interposed. "General," he said, "take the man's pledge that he will not tell of our whereabouts for twenty-four hours, and let us see him out of our lines, or we shall have a prayer-meeting from here to Richmond!"

Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou Shalt Be Saved. That is just as true for us as it was for the man who first heard it. Always the Lord Jesus is the one who saves, and it is through our trust that he becomes our Savior.

And we want more than pardon for sin and freedom from its chains; we ought to live the true life, and that, too, is part of what is meant by salvation. Everybody has reason to ask the jailor's question, and the answer to all is "Believe on the Lord Jesus."

You may wonder how it is that faith can make this wonderful difference in a life. It does so in several ways. For one thing, it is just the act by which we take God's gift. He wants to save us, he entreats us to be saved, but he does not force us to accept his offer. When we trust Jesus, our faith is the giving our lives to him that he may save them. Besides, we must not forget that we act on what we believe, and so faith can change a life altogether.

Perhaps you have thought faith was only believing a lot of things about Jesus; but it is far more than this. Suppose you were at the foot of a cliff, cut off by the rising tide, and knowing that if you stayed there the water would presently wash over the bit of beach you were on and drown you. And suppose some one let down a rope from the top of the cliff. It wouldn't matter how many things you believed about the rope, or how sure you were that the man above could draw you up; you would be drowned all the same if you only believed things. To be saved you must trust yourself to the rope. And the faith the Bible tells us of is like that; it is the giving ourselves up to Christ.—Condensed from Measuring Sunshine, by Frank Smith.

How Mr. Wanamaker Began the Christian Life. "I waited at the church until everybody went out except the janitor and the minister," Mr. Wanamaker said. "As the minister came down the aisle he met a country boy coming up, and I was the chap. I simply said to him, 'I have settled it tonight to give my heart to God.' And he reached out his hand and said, 'God bless you, my son; you will never regret it.' That was the whole business. I didn't wait to get some feeling. I accepted the fact—that I was a sinner, and that there was a Savior for sinners, and I came to him simply on the proposition that the gift of God is eternal life."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. A man has only as much religion as he can command in time of trouble.—Andrew Fuller.

A Scout smiles and whistles under all difficulties.—Scout Law.

Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.—Paul.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What one thing did Paul say he did? 2. What does he mean by the goal of the high calling in Christ Jesus? 3. Upon what things does Paul bid us meditate? 4. How shall we be helped by doing so? 5. Commit to memory Phil. 4.8.

PAUL WRITES TO THE PHILIPPIANS

GOLDEN TEXT: I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me. Philippians 4.13

LESSON Philippians 1 to 4 DEVOTIONAL READING Philippians 2.5-11

PHILIPPIANS 3.7 Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea verily, and I counted all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, *even* that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith: 10 that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; 11 if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing *I do,* forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, 14 I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you: 16 only, whereunto we have attained, by that same *rule* let us walk.

PHILIPPIANS 4.8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. FACTS OF WHICH SAUL OF TARSUS WAS PROUD, verses 5, 6. There were seven points which made Saul of Tarsus feel superior to most Jews. Five of them were these: he had been circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee.

Dr. Ozora S. Davis remarks that the items of which a man today would be proud are quite different, and he translates Paul's into the corresponding terms of our own thus: "I became a member of a Christian church at an early age; my ancestors came to America at the very beginning of the settlement; they were descended from the bluest blood of England, and I have belonged to a family that has given ministers, teachers, and professional men to the service of the country from the beginning, including ancestors in all the great wars that have been fought for freedom in America."

Furthermore, Paul had been zealous in persecuting the church; and had so scrupulously kept the law that he was blameless. These were facts that had given him great reputation among his compatriots. In his letter to the Galatians he writes: "Ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it: and I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

II. WHAT PAUL THE APOSTLE VALUED, verses 7 and 8. However, Paul declares, those things which from his old Jewish standpoint he had most highly valued, he was well content to lose in exchange for Christ. Paul puts the knowledge of Christ in one scale, and in the other the "all things," and the "all things" are light as a feather—the knowledge of God is of more value than all things put together. The old assets were nothing less than losses in comparison with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

"Paul means to tell us that everything must be reckoned as a positive loss if it in any way takes the place of that personal relationship with the living Christ which is the one essential fact in being a Christian" (Dr. Ozora S. Davis).

III. PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, verse 9. To "gain Christ," Paul goes on to say, means to "be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is from God by faith." "In Christ" means "in union with Christ"—it is that "intimate, personal relationship with Christ which was the very center and substance of Paul's religious life."

"This is the doctrine which has always been known as justification by faith. In a

few words it is simply this: Instead of establishing satisfactory relationship with God by discharging the duties involved in ceremonies and by keeping the commandments, we obtain this by entering into a relation with Christ of love, trust and obedience. Then God is assured of our purposes, for we must be actuated by the motives that controlled Jesus habitually. We become righteous as Jesus did, not by striving to do certain prescribed acts, but by loving, trusting, helping as Jesus did. There is no magic about this, no thrusting of a state or condition upon us. We reach it by allegiance and moral union rather than by doing deeds; this is true comradeship in faith" (Dr. Ozora S. Davis).

IV. PAUL'S GOAL, verses 10, 11. "I count all things to be loss, that I may gain Christ, so that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection," cries Paul. The power of Christ's resurrection came on Paul in the Damascus revelation. "The resurrection of Jesus Christ which manifested him as the Son of God, at the same time revealed in him the Son of God working unto salvation. The whole faith of the gospel turned upon Christ's resurrection; the new life of the believer springs from his opened grave" (One Volume Commentary).

"Paul was not satisfied to know a truth unless he also felt its power. For there are different sorts of knowing. Something happens and I hear of it. That is the slightest sort of knowing. The mind simply receives and registers the incident. But let me find that something has a relation to me—that it must influence and change my life; let me feel this deeply, and then I know the power of the fact. It is one thing to stand on the shore and see the great waves and say, 'There is a storm'; and it is a very different thing to be out in the midst of those waves, tossed every way by them, fighting for your life. On the shore you know of them; in their midst you know them, you know their power" (Phillips Brooks).

Paul desires also to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death. "We can understand the intensity of the apostle's desire to experience the power of his Savior's resurrection; but is it not strange that he should be equally eager to become intimate with his Master's pangs as well as with his triumphs?" questions Dr. Jowett. "Ah, but the share in the triumph is impossible without some share in the pang. When the sons of Zebedee asked that they might sit, one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom, the Lord made this apparently cold reply: 'Are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of?' And yet the reply was full of grace. We must share the cup if we would share the throne. And so the apostle is ambitious to know 'the fellowship of his sufferings.' He would go with him down the dark lanes, and into the chill, lonely places of Gethsemane, and climb some little way up the slope of Calvary, if perchance he might the better appreciate the light and warmth and glory of the resurrection morning, 'Becoming conformed unto his death'" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

"The death of Christ was the coronation of his life of love and service, and he met it in the spirit of complete devotion. To become conformed to Christ's death, therefore, means that we are to carry the spirit of unselfish devotion to the very end of our life, and crown the length of our days with fearless death (Dr. Ozora S. Davis).

Paul's goal is the resurrection—"if by any means," he says, "I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead." "The resurrection from the dead will mean perfect, unbroken knowledge of Christ and fellowship with him. Paul knows by experience the difficulty of remaining loyal to the end, of living so conformed to Christ's death that the power of sin will not revive its mastery over him. So his apparent uncertainty here of reaching the goal is not distrust of God. It is distrust of himself. It emphasizes the need he feels of watchfulness and constant striving lest having preached to others, he be found a castaway, 1 Cor. 9.27 (A. C. Kennedy).

"The resurrection of the dead stands for the completion of our earthly life, the coronation of our human endeavors, the realization of all that we have dreamed and striven for while on earth."

V. PAUL'S METHOD OF OBTAINING HIS GOAL, verses 12-14. Luther says that a Christian is not in being, but in becoming. Paul says perfection is not in being but in striving. Possibly his words in these verses were designed especially for some of his Philippian readers who claimed high sanctity, a superiority over other brethren.

Once Paul had thought himself wholly blameless, but now he speaks humbly of himself. "I would not have you think," he says, "that I imagine I have already

attained my goal, that I am already perfect—*but*—though I am still a learner, I am pressing onward to lay hold on that for which I was laid hold on by Christ."

"No one of us has any right to make today's encampment the place of his permanent habitation; no one of us has won any victory with which he has the right to be for a moment content" (Dr. G. Glenn Atkins).

"I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus," Paul says, referring to his experience on the way to Damascus.

"Is this your conception of your life? Captured! Apprehended by Jesus Christ! Set apart for himself! Do you realize that you are bound by the most sacred fetters to your Conqueror, and are following his chariot through the earth? Life would assume a new aspect if you realized this" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

"Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold," Paul repeats: "but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind—wasting no moment in looking backward—and stretching forward to all things which are before—like a racer straining every nerve to reach the goal—I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The prize is the heavenly life of the redeemed, verses 11, 20, 21. "The things which Paul forgets are not merely the external prerogatives of Judaism. As the metaphor itself would suggest, they are the earlier struggles, the past experiences, the incomplete attainments of the Christian" (Canon Liddon).

"Brooding over past failures and bragging about past successes is fatal to the development of highest life. Forget these experiences and so get forward in the way of the will of God" (Francis Wayland Pattison).

"The purified life in heaven is, in a word, both the goal and the prize. Contrast with this exulting thought Omar Khayyám: 'The stars are setting and the caravan starts for the dawn of nothing.'" (Dr. A. S. Kennedy).

VI. LIVE UP TO THE STANDARDS ATTAINED, verses 15, 16. "Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded," urges Paul. He is not speaking of perfection attained—he has already said that he is not already made perfect—but of the way toward perfection gained. "A little while ago I lost myself in the many windings of a great city. I asked for guidance, and was conducted by a willing friend to the required road. When my feet were on the highway my friend left me, saying, 'Now you're right.' Not that I had arrived, but that I was sure of arrival. And thus it was with Paul. He had found 'the Way,' the perfect Way, and some day he would most certainly become like his Lord, for he would see him as he is" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

"Let us therefore be thus minded," that is, let us acknowledge how far we are from our goal and make every effort to attain it. Let us forget past attainments and reach out for further growth.

"And if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you." "If in this holy and strenuous crusade we stumble in judgment, God will not permit us to stray into disaster and contempt. He will tenderly lead our erring feet into the Way again, for 'even this shall God reveal unto you'" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

"Only, whereunto we have attained, by that same rule let us walk."

"Only one thing! As far as we have come, keep the path!" (Weiss).

VII. PAUL'S INVENTORY OF THE MENTAL FURNISHINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN, 4. 8. "Finally, brethren," Paul says: He has said this once before (3. 1), but he is loth to conclude his letter to the church he loves so well. "One word more," he must add, and this is the climax of his exhortations. He believes that as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he, that the thoughts and feelings and interests that occupy his heart determine the kind of man he is and will be. Therefore in his final counsel to the Philippians he urges them to meditate upon things true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, of good report.

Whatsoever things are true. "True, not simply veracious. The word 'true' is not used by the apostle as we use it in a court of law, when we enjoin a witness to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.' The things described in a police court as true are usually ugly and repulsive; truth is always beautiful Truth in a police court is correspondence with fact. Truth as used in the New Testament is correspondence with God. An unclean story may be accurate; an unclean story can never be true. A story is true when in very substance it shares the likeness of him who is the truth. Veracity accurately describes a happening; truth describes a

particular happening. We are therefore enjoined not to think about merely accurate things, but about accurate things which unveil the face of God" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

"Whatsoever things are honorable." Think of things that are worthy of honor. "Whatsoever things are just." "Our word 'just' does not convey the apostle's mind and meaning. Justice can be very cold and steely, like the justice of a Shylock. It may mean only superficial exactitude as between man and man. But to be really just is to be right with God. No man is really just until he is adjusted to his Maker. Whatsoever things satisfy the standards of the Almighty, think on these things" (Dr. J. H. Jowett). "Whatsoever things are pure," stainless, unblemished. "Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report."

And then, as though he feared his list might have omitted something that should have been included, the apostle adds: "If there be any virtue," anything excellent, "and if there be any praise," anything commendable, "think on these things."

"Let us therefore go about on journeys of exploration. Let us seek for these lovely things in humanity, in Nature, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Everywhere our eyes will be surprised by precious discoveries, and in the brightness of our possessions we shall be children of light" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What fellowship with Christ's sufferings has Paul had? When was Paul "laid hold on" by Christ Jesus?

Paul in Philippi. Philippi was far more to Paul than a woman's prayer meeting on the riverside; more than the conversion of a rich purple-vendor of Thyatira; more than a conflict with the civil authorities in a prison episode gloriously ending in midnight praises and shaking prison walls. It was an introduction to new and impelling world forces which, to his vigorous and impressible spirit, meant change of front and of attitude and enlargement of powers. Philippi must henceforth be to him a strategic center from which must issue far-reaching projects and activities. Some ten years later he wrote to this church of his own establishing, the wonderful love letter, the Epistle to the Philippians, which abounds in the impressions received during his residence among them and his still optimistic confidence in their proving competent to any task to which it might challenge them.—Charles R. Foster, in the Methodist Quarterly Review.

The Occasion for Paul's Letter to the Philippians. At the close of his life, while a prisoner in Rome awaiting trial, Paul received from the Philippians money and gifts, as an expression of their affection for him as well as a provision for his needs. In grateful acknowledgment of their kindness and love, Paul wrote to them this letter.

The Great Lesson which the Epistle to the Philippians Teaches. "To all ages of the Church—to our own especially—this epistle reads a great lesson. While we are expending our strength on logical definitions or ecclesiastical rules, it recalls us from these distractions to the very heart and center of the Gospel—*the life of Christ and the life in Christ*. Here is the meeting-point of all our differences, the healing of all our feuds, the true life alike of individuals and sects and churches: here doctrine and practice are wedded together; for here is the 'Creed of Creeds' involved in and arising out of the 'Work of Works.'"

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Note that Paul does not say to the Philippians, "Do not think of false things, of dishonorable things, unjust things, impure things, unlovely things, evil things." What he says is, "Think of things true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, of good report." If you can lead your pupils to dwell upon the true, the beautiful and the good, there will be no room in their minds or their lives for the untrue, the ugly, the evil. One whose heart is occupied with what is good is safe from all that is evil.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE CHRISTIAN'S GOAL

Beginning the Lesson. In discussing this lesson let us not forget that Paul wrote it after a life exceptionally full and strenuous, after years of singleness of purpose, when he might have been content with the results of his life work and with his attain-

ment of Christian character. Yet this letter breathes the humility of the little child who said, "I don't know everything; I only know a little." And let us recall the circumstances under which the letter was written: Paul was in prison at Rome with the prospect of death hanging over him, yet it is one of the brightest, cheeriest letters that he ever wrote. He was an old man, his race was nearly run, and we do not expect from old men such enthusiasm and intensity and ardor as breathes through this extract from his letter. We marvel that this veteran has the wonderful forcefulness of a young recruit, and we ascribe it to his one consuming passion to know Christ and the power of his resurrection.

One Thing I Do. Mark how the great apostle gathers all his energies together in concentrated and undivided purpose. His religious ambition shall be supreme, and in the fierceness of his desire he will draw every minor yearning to the central purpose, like tributaries converging upon the main stream of a glorious river. It is this concentration which enfolds the secret of the progressive lives of all the saints of God. They live for one thing, and for one thing only. So many of us make our religion one of many interests. We take it up for a time, and then we put it down again. We are religious by spasms, we are devotional by turns. We assume there is a time for everything, and we often make the heavenly visitor tarry in the hall, or even at the door, until we have disposed of more urgent business. Now, to the apostle Paul the urgent business in all business was just that of religion itself. Life to Paul was one vast temple, and the market was just a part of the temple, and so was his trade, and so were his friendships, and the one spiritual atmosphere must possess and pervade them all.—Dr. J. H. Jowett, in The High Calling.

What Was Paul's Religion? The deepest thing in him, and the all-controlling thing was his religion. With some men, religion is a thing apart, with Paul it was his whole existence. Some men are religious only on the great festival days of the Church. Others are religious only in the emergencies of life—the hours of physical danger, or serious illness, or approaching death. Paul lived in the atmosphere of religion every hour of the day.—Dr. C. E. Jefferson.

Paul's Life Aim. In Wales and in Scotland, in the mining districts, "winning" the coal, or the mineral, is a common expression, by which they mean sinking a shaft deep down to get out the ore in richer abundance. Let us take that idea. Paul, on the day when he first discovered Christ, found himself to be the possessor of a large estate. He was standing, so to speak, at the opening of this mine, and he saw some of the precious ore. He could not take his eye off what he did see; but the more he looked, the more he discovered of the inexhaustible riches there. He had only to dig down, to sink his shaft in all directions, and there was no end to what he might bring up out of this mine; and so it was his lifetime's wish, "That I may win Christ."—Andrew Bonar.

A Man May Judge his Christianity by his Thoughts. What a man thinks about and feels after is truer to himself than what a man does or attains to publicly. For what a man *does* is not *all* his own; it was partly the world's work; opportunities came and circumstances helped him. Whereas many another has been hindered by circumstances from doing what it was really in him to do. Many a one can say quite sincerely and with no pride:

"All I aspired to be
And am not, comforts me."

And so, a life cannot be judged altogether, if at all, by its *performances*. But it is different when we consider a man's thoughts and inward purposes. These are his own. They are there, because in some way they suit his soul and feel at home with him.

There is another consideration which helps us to feel how momentous for each of us are the things we think about. It is the nature of our secret thoughts to become words that are irrevocable and deeds that can never be repaired. What is in a man is always revealing itself. We may put on a kind of life which is not in accordance with our real spirit, but the true man, the real man, is constantly peering out through the seams. Thus, for example, we often detect a tone in a man's voice or a swift look in his face, and it matters not how the man may hasten to recover himself and to make us forget in his general behavior what we saw for a moment, it will be some time before we can put out of our minds what we saw for the instant.

The things that we do suddenly and say hastily are perhaps the most faithful revelations of our character, for they spring fresh from the background and real basis of our life. Whereas anyone can bring himself to speak appropriately and to act

becomingly if he has had a little time to consider and if he wants to stand well with people.—Dr. John A. Hutton.

For Discussion. 1. How shall we regard past sin? We may forget in order to aspire. Robert Louis Stevenson's prayer: "Help us with the grace of courage that we be none of us cast down, when we sit lamenting amid the ruins of our happiness or our integrity; touch us with the fire of thy altar, that we may be up and doing to rebuild our city."

2. The importance of our thoughts. They are the driving power of life.

3. One thing I do. A plea for concentration.

4. Most of the churches which Paul served took his service as a matter of course, permitting him to take care of himself, as he was glad to do. But the Philippians repeatedly sent him gifts. A modern church will accomplish the same purpose by somewhat different means—not by presents which are designed to supplement an inadequate income, but by a salary that will make it possible for the minister to live in reasonable comfort.—Dr. James R. Beebe.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did we hear about Salonica (Thessalonica) during the Great War? 2. How often do you examine the Scriptures? 3. What is the best way in which to examine them? 4. Do our class discussions show that we are following Paul's advice in the words of our Golden Text?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
CHOOSING THE BEST THINGS

Beginning the Lesson. A low hill may seem a great height to one who has never seen a mountain. A pond may appear of considerable size to one who has never sailed upon a lake. A cottage may seem palatial to one who has never entered a mansion. There are good and better and best things in this world. Paul had inherited and won what he as a Jew accounted most important, but when he found Christ he accounted him the supreme good. For Christ there was nothing in all the world that he would not give up if it were necessary to do so in order to win his friendship and love and help.

Last week we heard about some of Paul's experiences in Philippi, and today we have a selection from the letter which he wrote to the people of the church he founded there, in which he tells them that to win Christ had been his goal. He tells them, too, how he was striving to reach his goal: how does he express it in verse thirteen?

(Teachers of thoughtful Seniors will not find the entire text too difficult of explanation. It is told more simply in the Review Lesson for this Quarter. In Intermediate and many Senior classes the text may well be limited to 3.13-16 and 8.4.)

How to Accomplish your Aim. Perhaps you will remember the letter in which Paul wrote to his friends, "This one thing I do." You were not interested the first time you read that lesson because the whole idea of driving headlong toward the accomplishment of a purpose was associated with martyrs and patriots and—yes, fanatics. As you stood at the Monday morning head of the week and looked down its little length of days, your life was not to be the life of a martyr; you would be given no opportunity of dying for your country; and you hoped that you would not be a fanatic, even on the subject of baseball.

Later you found that "this one thing I do" was the guiding principle for the day of a brick mason building the walls of a house to a plumb line, or the day of a successful homemaker within the walls of that house. The brick mason at the beginning of his day did not place a brick here and there without rule or reason. He set a plumb line and built to that persistently. Nor does a good homemaker wander feverishly through a day—uncertain whether she ought to bake cookies or to dust a room. She chooses out of the many tasks that might be done in that day those tasks that must be done to make the best possible kind of home out of what might otherwise be just a house to live in; her day has a plan, and everything that she does has meaning because it is a part of that plan.

Now if you expect to be a real ruler in your kingdom, if you are in earnest in your search after this best possible kind of girl that you are one time to be, "This one thing I do" is the song with which you meet the choices that come to you in your common, everyday life at school or at work. Just as a great naturalist goes through the world finding this specimen or that to add to his collection, so you will travel far, and spend time and effort in finding and making your own those worth-while

things that shall make a fine life out of what might be just living.—Rhoda E. McCulloch, in The Kingdom of Our Thoughts.

Choose the True, the Beautiful, the Good. No life is thoroughly good unless it is beautiful. No personality is potent unless it has charm. Loveliness is a form of power, and it ought to be your constant ambition to be lovely. Christ says that Christians are the light of the world, but you cannot light the world up unless you are beautiful. Your life, then, must be foundationed in beauty.

Let me give you as many hints as you have fingers on your right hand. First, form the habit of looking at beautiful things. An English artist, Burne-Jones, said to his little boy one day: "I want you to look at every lovely thing in the world, and remember it, and forget about the rest." That is my advice to you all. Form the habit of picking out the things which are pretty. Train your eyes to linger long on the things that are beautiful. Train your mind to tarry with the things that are lovely. God is always asking you to do this.

All of the seasons are crammed full of beauty, and the beauty is of a thousand different kinds, so that if you once get your eyes open to it, you will be delighted all the time. You will have a perpetual feast. You can eat beauty just as truly as you can eat bread. You cannot live on bread alone. You must live on all the words which proceed from the mouth of God, and one of the sweetest words is the Beautiful.

If you form the habit early of noticing things which are beautiful, your eyes will pick up lovely things all the way through life. When you walk through the woods, keep your eyes wide open for the beautiful. When you walk through the human world, if you look for loveliness you will find it in great abundance.

Second: Form the habit of doing everything you can to make our world more beautiful. You might begin with your own room at home. Is it as beautiful as you can make it? Every room in which a person lives ought to have at least one pretty thing in it. That one pretty thing will keep the heart awake.

What can you do to make your own life more beautiful, your church life, your city life? These are interesting problems to work at, fully as important as any of the problems in the Arithmetic or Algebra. We are not doing our duty unless we are adding to the charm and bloom of the world.

Third: In order to increase the world's beauty one must first of all go to work upon himself. Your soul must be made beautiful if you are to live in a beautiful world. I was attending a summer conference a few years ago, and one afternoon a Chinese girl was found lying on the grass all by herself, crying. An American girl went where she was and asked her what was the matter. She replied with sobs: "I'm all wrong on the inside." That is the trouble with many people—they are wrong on the inside. Some of them live in beautiful houses and wear beautiful dresses, but they are not happy, because they are wrong on the inside. They have an ugly spirit and their life cannot be beautiful. "Make the tree good," said Jesus, "and then the fruit will be good." We must be beautiful inside if we are to live a beautiful life.

Fourth: Do everything as beautifully as you can. You ought to strive to gain a beautiful voice, and to use the English language gracefully, and to give your personality the highest possible charm. There are two ways of doing everything—an ugly way and a beautiful way. There are two ways of bearing sorrows—a hateful way and a lovely way. One can make an awful face, and scold and groan and cry, and one can smile and laugh and submit with grace.

Fifth: You will be greatly assisted in living the beautiful life, if you keep close to the most beautiful Man who ever lived—Jesus of Nazareth. You have thought of him as being good. I hope you will think of him, also, as being beautiful. The five hints which I have given to you, I got from him. It was his practice to notice beautiful things. He loved the birds and the flowers. They gave him ideas which he gave to the people. He loved nature and revelled in the loveliness of God's out-of-doors. He saw all the beautiful traits of human nature, and could see loveliness where no one else could see it. Nobody could see any beauty in Samaria. The Jews counted it a horrid country, and hated the people who lived there. Jesus looked upon Samaria with loving eyes and it was as beautiful to him as a great harvest field. Nobody could see any beauty in publicans. They were pushed aside and treated like so many dogs. Jesus saw beautiful aspirations and hopes down in their hearts, and he made one of them a member of the circle of his most intimate friends. Nothing beautiful escaped him. The act of a poor woman dropping two bits of copper into the contribution box in the temple seemed to him wondrously beautiful, and he held it up before his disciples, that it might sparkle in the world's eye like a gem, forever.

Men stood astonished at the beautiful ideas which came out of his month. His words will never pass away. They are too beautiful to die.

His disposition was beautiful. "I do always the things which are pleasing to my Father." "My meat is to do the will of him who sent me. and to finish his work." When only a boy, he knew that he must be about his Father's business. He never lost his beautiful spirit. He never gave way to hate. He never threatened to take revenge. Men were hateful to him, but he asked God to forgive them.

Everything he did was beautiful. One of his friends said: "He went about doing good." That is a fine description of his life. He filled every day with beautiful deeds. His thoughts were beautiful, his feelings were beautiful, and his whole life was overflowing with beauty.—Condensed from Under Twenty, by Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

The Prize of an Upward Calling. Paul wanted to reach a higher level of character and goodness. This was the great prize Jesus offered him. And that is always the prize of prizes.

A boy once learned to swim because he wanted a prize in the swimming races of his school. He worked very hard. The great day of the race came. Away the boys shot. He swam steadily for the first half of the race, and then he passed one after another. But just as he almost reached the winning post another boy shot past him, and our friend was second instead of first. It was a great disappointment, and for several days he went about feeling very sulky and saying to himself, "All that work for nothing!" Then one morning, as he was walking along the seashore, he heard a nursemaid scream, and found that the little boy she was looking after had fallen into the water, and was being carried out by the tide. At once he plunged bravely into the sea and swam to the boy, and was able to keep him up until some men who had also heard the cry came to the rescue of both. He realized then that the power to swim was the best prize, after all.

Jesus wants you to be like Paul, and press on after the best of all prizes—your high calling to the powers that belong to the life and character of our Lord.—A. D. Belden.

Paying the Price. My brother "tried out" for the tracks. I had been down at the college. One of the girls offered him some chocolate candy.

"No, thank you, I'm a track man," he said proudly.

"That's just what he said the other day," another girl said acusingly. "He came home for dinner with my brother and I had made chocolate pie just for him, because I knew how he used to like it. He wouldn't eat a bit. 'No, thank you, I'm a track man'—that is his one argument."

Others told me that he would leave all sorts of festivities early, explaining, "Track men have to be in bed by ten." He worked doggedly on the cinder path day after day.

Just before the two hundred and twenty-yard dash at the State Track Meet, a friend of his from another college said jokingly: "You might slow up just once, old fellow. You've beaten me nine times. You know you can, and everybody knows you can. It's my last chance at a gold medal." They drew places and my brother drew the hardest one, the inside track. The turn in it is sharper than the others. His friend with the gold-medal ambition smiled: "That's all right. You'll have to slow up now. No one ever won the two-twenty on an inside track." But he did win.

"It isn't drawing the right track that makes a fellow get there," my brother concluded. "Nor is it even a question of having natural speed. That piece of tape that we all fight so for at the end of the race goes to the highest bidder. It's rather expensive, but it's yours if you're willing to pay for it."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. No one of us has won any victory with which he has the right to be for a moment content.—Dr. G. G. Atkins.

Ever onward to the fight,
Ever upward to the Light,
Ever true to God and Right—
Up and on! —John Oxenham.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does "he reasoned with them from the Scriptures" mean. 2. What is the meaning of "behooved" and "consorted?" 3. What is the meaning of the charge against Paul and Silas in verse 6? 4. What was the charge made against Jesus which verse 7 recalls? (Jn. 19.12.) 5. What did Paul say in 1 Thess. 2.13 about the way his message was received at Thessalonica? 6. What two kinds of hearers does our text show?

LESSON XI—SEPTEMBER 13

PAUL IN THESSALONICA AND BERŒA

GOLDEN TEXT: Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 1 Thessalonians 5.21

LESSON Acts 17.1-12

DEVOTIONAL READING 1 Thessalonians 5.16-24

ACTS 17 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: 2 and Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the scriptures, 3 opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, *said he*, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ. 4 And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. 5 But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people. 6 And when they found them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; 7 whom Jason hath received: and then all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus. 8 And they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9 And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Borœa: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so. 12 Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honorable estate, and of men not a few.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. PAUL PREACHES IN THESSALONICA, verses 1-3. From Philippi Paul and his companions went by way of the cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica. Here at Thessalonica they remained several months, as we know from Paul's letters to the Thessalonians, but Luke speaks only of his preaching in the synagogue for three successive Sabbaths. Luke says he "reasoned with them": he cited Scripture passages which were prophetic of the Christ: he then showed that Jesus fulfilled these prophecies, and thus reasoned, or argued, that Jesus is the Christ. Arnot explains Paul's reasoning by this figure: "The Jews were like little children who had a tree in their garden, their father's legacy. The children had gathered the nuts as they grew, and laid them up with reverence in a store house; but they knew not how to break open the shell and so get the meat out of the nuts. Paul broke the shell, opened out the kernel, and presented it as food to the hungry."

II. THE RESULT OF PAUL'S PREACHING, verses 4-9. Some of the Jews, large numbers of devout Greeks (Jewish proselytes, or at least Greeks who attended the synagogue and worshiped God) and not a few of the women, were convinced by Paul's reasoning, and cast their lot with Paul and Silas, sharing their way of life. When writing to the Thessalonians Paul refers to the way in which these converts afterwards spread abroad the gospel: "From you hath sounded both the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia (Greece), but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth."

Most of the Jews, however, were jealous and gathering a crowd of idle loafers (vile fellows of the rabble), they set the city in an uproar over the missionaries.

What did these vile fellows of the rabble know or care about the jealousy of the Jews or the work of Paul and Silas? There was to be rioting of some sort, that was enough for their pleasure, what it was all about mattered not.

In one of our cities a man was arraigned in a police court on a charge of vagrancy. "What have you been doing?" the judge sternly asked the prisoner. "Oh, just circulatin' 'round some, Jedge," the prisoner replied. "Retired from circulation for thirty days!" the judge announced to the clerk of the court, who entered this verdict in his records. Every city has its loafers who are quite certain to get retired from circulation sooner or later, for there is peril in idleness. A young man in the slightest danger of becoming an idler should ponder Gladstone's words: "I tell you that thrift of time will repay your most sanguine dreams, and that the waste of it will make you

dwindle, alike in intellectual and moral stature, beyond your darkest reckoning."

Paul and Silas were staying at the home of a man named Jason, and the rabble hurried there to seize them. Not finding Paul and Silas, they dragged Jason and other brethren before the rulers of the city. (The Greek word translated "rulers" is "politarchs." Because that title is not found in classical literature, it was long held that Luke was inaccurate here. But across the main street of Thessalonia Octavius Cæsar had erected a triumphal arch, doubtless in commemoration of the victory at Philippi over the Republican leaders, and on the foundation the names of the city magistrates have been found inscribed with the title Politarch. A block with this word upon it is now in the British Museum.)

"These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also," they cried. The exaggeration is the language of passionate excitement, but it bears testimony, nevertheless, to the power of the gospel as proclaimed by these apostles.

There is food for thought in the sermon which one of Wesley's followers preached from this text. This is his outline: "First, the world is wrong way up; second, it has got to be turned upside down; third, we're the chaps to do it."

Then the mob cried out that Jason had received these men, who acted contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. To proclaim "another king" was rank treason, and the penalty was death. Compare the charge made against Jesus, Jn. 19.12. From his Epistle to the Thessalonians we know that Paul spoke often about the Kingdom of God and about the second coming of Christ, which probably gave rise to the charge.

The multitude and the rulers of the city were greatly troubled by these charges. The rulers feared the Roman authorities higher up. "Claudius, who then held the reins of government, is represented by Suetonius as a man very jealous of the least commotion and timorous to the last degree, which obliged the rulers under him to be watchful against everything that looked dangerous" (Matthew Henry). The rulers took security from Jason and the rest and let them go. "To prevent the repetition of such scenes, Jason and his friends were bound over to keep the peace and required to give security to that effect. This was quite in accordance with Roman law. It may be compared with the action of some English magistrates in forbidding processions of the Salvation Army because of the riots that followed, although they knew that the Salvationists themselves were not disturbers of the peace" (Dr. Walter Adeney).

III. PAUL PREACHES AT BERŒA, verses 10-12. "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another," had been Christ's counsel to his disciples. Paul and Silas made their escape from Thessalonica by night and went on to Berœa. There, as was their custom, they preached in the Jewish synagogue. The people were more noble than the people of Thessalonica—they were of more noble birth, as the Greek word literally means, and they showed their better birth by the way in which they received the evangelists. They were, moreover, not prejudiced against Paul's message before hearing it, but listened to what he said about the prophecies concerning Jesus and then turned to the Scriptures to see if "these things"—Paul's statements—were true.

The Berœans would not be led even by Paul without investigating for themselves the truth of his words. "However high authority lies behind any teaching, test it by the Scriptures. Test all modern preaching by the oracles of God. There is no better way."

Many of the Jews and many Greeks and Greek women of honorable estate believed Paul after their own study of the Scriptures. "In Macedonia, as in Asia Minor, women occupied a much freer and more influential position than in Athens. Men of all classes were impressed by the teaching of Paul, but only women of the leading families; and the difference is obviously due to the fact that the poorer women were most likely to be under the sway of superstition" (Professor Ramsay).

IV. THE END OF THE WORK IN MACEDONIA, verses 13-15. When the hostile Jews from Thessalonica heard of Paul's success in Berœa, they came thither and again stirred up trouble. To escape, Paul was sent by the Christians of Berœa to the sea and accompanied to Athens. By his Berœan escort Paul sent word back to Silas and Timothy, who had remained behind, to join him at once. Thus ended Paul's work in Macedonia. From each city where he preached he had been driven

away by persecution, but in establishing churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berœa he had in reality taken possession of the province of Macedonia.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How was Paul led to enter Europe? Where was his first mission and who were his first converts? Who is the first Gentile in our lessons of last Quarter who searched the Scriptures? Who helped him search them to the right purpose?

From Philippi to Thessalonica. "Having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as ye know, at Philippi, we waxed bold in our God to speak with you the gospel of God," wrote Paul in his first letter to the Thessalonians. From the prison in Philippi, after a visit to the brethren at Lydia's house, Paul and Silas went on to Thessalonica, for though their backs were still smarting from the cruel scourges received at Philippi, they never dreamed of giving up their work. Several months must have been spent at Thessalonica, for while there the Philippians sent contributions twice to Paul (Phil. 4.16), and his letters to the Thessalonians show that his stay must have been prolonged. The majority in the church which he founded there were Gentiles, to whom his gospel "came not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance."

For the Blackboard. To your record for Lesson VIII, add: Thessalonica and Berœa in Macedonia.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Egnatian Way, a great Roman road seven hundred miles long, led from the Hellespont (the Dardanelles) to the Adriatic at Dyrrachium. In traversing this road from Philippi to Thessalonica, Paul passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, two cities which divided the total distance of about one hundred miles into three nearly equal journeys.

Thessalonica lies in sight of Mount Olympus, the fabled home of Zeus and other Grecian deities. It was the capital of the province of Macedonia and a flourishing commercial city in Paul's time. It was founded in 315 B. C. by Cassander, King of Macedon, and given the name of his wife, a sister of Alexander the Great. Today it is still a flourishing city known by its abbreviated name of Salonica, and its main street, the Grande Rue de Vardar, was once part of the *Via Egnatia*. The remains of two imperial arches (one of which is here pictured) built more than fifteen hundred years ago still spans the street. It is second only to Constantinople in population, commerce and wealth among the cities which formerly belonged to European Turkey. During the Great War it was the base of the Allies' operations in Macedonia.

Roman Arch, Salonica

It was a journey of some forty miles to Berœa, and it must have taken Paul two days to accomplish it. It lay off the Egnatian Way, and Cicero accordingly refers to it as "an out-of-the-way place." It is today called by the Slavs simply Ber, but its Turkish name is Karaferia. Travelers are struck by the beauty of its situation.

"Beyond the town rise tiers of glorious mountains, snow-capped through much of the year, and sparkling streams hurry down their sides and flow through the streets, bubbling up in innumerable fountains."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

You read the Bible in preparing for your teaching, but do you, as did the members of the church at Berœa, examine the Scriptures daily to see what are its messages for the world today and for you yourselves? Are you perhaps interpreting the Bible to your pupils as it was interpreted to you in your childhood, without your ever having examined it yourself to see whether these things are so? Paul's word to the Thessalonians is for you: Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

In the Bible and Modern Life, Mr. C. S. Cooper has this message for Bible Class leaders:

In some way we must get men interested in the Bible. This task, like other important tasks, is not easy. How many leaders have really tried to enlist men in the study of this Book? The interesting of men in the Bible involves able and courageous leadership, the study of methods, Bible courses and literature, business ability, money, sacrifice, patience, and beneath all, an unquenchable conviction that God's revelation in his Word is eternally worth while. The Church needs able, broad-minded, godly men to teach the Bible in men's Bible classes. To popularize and dignify the Bible in the hearts of young men is one of the Church's opportunities in this generation. The Bible class is for the sake of Bible study; Bible study is not for the sake of the Bible class. The class hour should arouse men to a new interest in the Bible, and to the formation of a habit of permanent Bible study. It will rarely do this if the men attend simply to listen to a sermonette on a particular passage.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Beginning the Lesson. In a luxurious home of Thessalonica about one hundred years before Paul came to Jason's home there, a guest sat writing letters. He was the author of books that are read today, which in classic Latin tell us how to endure calmly all the ills that may befall us, how to trust our friends, how to grow old gracefully. He was among devoted friends whose wealth was at his disposal. But some of the ills of life had come to him. His office had been taken from him, part of his wealth was gone, the people no longer flattered him, and he was banished from Rome. How did he bear these troubles, he who could so well tell others how theirs should be borne? He had been walking the floor, wringing his hands and sobbing, he writes; there is no hope left for him. "If you saw me, you would not see me," is the translation of the words his pen was tracing, "You would not see even a trace of me, not a shadow, but the image of a breathing corpse. Would that before this you had seen me dead!" Those of you who have studied Latin recognize in this weak man Marcus Tullius Cicero, one of the most celebrated orators of all the ages.

"Show me some one person living according to the principles he professes," exclaimed Epictetus; "show me one who is sick and happy; disgraced and happy." Such a one was our hero Paul. Like Cicero he was an exile from home, self-exiled for the love of the gospel he was proclaiming; like him, too, he was poor, so poor that he gladly received contributions from his friends at Philippi; like him, too, he was a guest in a friend's home at Thessalonica. But, unlike him, he labored with his own hands for his support; and instead of having every wish supplied, he was persecuted and driven from the city. Cicero knew how ills should be borne, but could not bear them; Paul bore them triumphantly. Every effort to silence him but resulted in stirring him on to even greater zeal, if possible.

Paul's Efforts at Thessalonica were Attended with Success. What testimony to this effect was borne by the hostile Jews? In the words of Dr. J. R. Miller, "It is good to make the enemies of the gospel write its history and describe its triumphs. Many of the finest and truest things said about Christ are words that were spoken by his bitter foes. For example, when the Jews saw the publicans and sinners drawn to Jesus they said, 'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.' Again, when Jesus when home with Zacchæus, they said that he was 'gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.' Both these bitter words really expressed great

truths which were the very glory of Christ's commission. In their charge against these missionaries the Jews first gave a striking testimony to the influence of the gospel in the word at that time and the work Christianity had done. They confessed that the missionaries had been turning the world upside down."

The Contrast between the Thessalonians and the Berœans. High praise is it which Paul bestows on the Berœans. Was it merely because they examined the Scriptures? The Jews of Thessalonica, whom Paul declares less noble, examined the Scriptures no less zealously. All Jews were very familiar with their sacred writings. Wherein, then, lay the difference between Thessalonian and Berœan Jews? In their different standpoint, their different spirit in which they examined the Scriptures. The Thessalonian Jews were narrow-minded, bigoted men; they examined the Scriptures with minds already proof-hardened. The Berœan Jews were open-minded, truth-seekers; they examined the Scriptures daily whether these things were so. To both, Paul brought a new message, that Jesus is the Christ foretold in the Scriptures. The prejudiced Thessalonians flatly rejected the message without any effort to find out for themselves whether Paul's words agreed with the prophecies. The unprejudiced Berœans gave his message a fair hearing, and then with inquiring spirit looked up the passages and weighed them with Paul's words. We are not surprised that the next words of the account read, "Many of them therefore believed."

A Lesson for Today. In all study of science, philosophy and theology, we need to have the temper which will search whether or not such and such things are so, without setting up an artificial bound to investigation, or prematurely, previous to proof, hardening an incipient prejudice into a rigid opinion. In theology, this would be a good rule to propound: Whenever in doubt, look in the Bible! The Bible, however, is not a magical book to be conjured with, out of which here or there we may cite a stray text, by way of special pleading, to reinforce a view which we have ourselves already decided shall be right, but a collection of consistent deliverances concerning faith and duty whose full meaning can be explicated only by patient, candid, and prayerful comparison of Scripture with Scripture, in order that, as the result of systematic search, we may know whether these things are so.

In Biblical exegesis, as in current philosophy, there is altogether too much of snap-judgment and dogmatic deliverance as to things that we think ought to be true. Questions of faith, however, are after all questions of fact: Is this or that doctrine so? We can have no possible interest in having things other than they are, except as we are able to revise them into things that are better yet. The historicity of fact goes before the idealism of faith; we must know what things are "so" before we can understand what things are to be sought. The nobility of the Berœan temper, then, consists in a willingness not only to go along with the truth wherever it may lead, but also to take extraordinary pains to search for the facts in all places likely or unlikely to contain or convey them. No man is expected to believe any doctrines without reason, but he is noble only when by candid and protracted inquiry he is willing to pay the price for knowledge. Of many a profound truth it is true that we see only when we search.—Zion's Herald.

John Wesley's Method of Searching the Scriptures. In the introduction to his sermons, John Wesley gives this account of his method of Bible study.

Here I am, far away from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone; only God is here. In his presence I open and I read his Book for this end—to find the way to Heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights. Lord, is it not thy Word? If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God. Thou hast said, if any man be willing to do thy will he shall know. I am willing to do, let me know thy will. I then search out and consider parallel passages of Scripture, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I meditate thereon with all the confession and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God, and then the writings whereby, these being dead, yet speak, and what I thus learn, that I teach.

A Pledge. Now is the time to receive the word with all readiness of mind and to examine the Scriptures daily. Here is a pledge which an evangelist sometimes asks his hearers to sign. Will you sign it?

"I promise to examine carefully the evidence that the Bible is God's book and Jesus Christ is God's Son and man's Savior; and if I find reason to believe that this book is true, and he is man's Savior, I will accept and confess him before men and undertake to follow him."

Continue to Search the Scriptures. A young man called upon his pastor to say he had made a mistake in joining the church and to ask if he would not better leave it. Their conversation as recorded in The Youth's Companion was as follows:

"What makes you think that you have made a mistake?"

"Because," the young fellow answered slowly, "I can't feel it any more. I know, of course, that religion isn't simply emotion. But it shouldn't bore me. There's something very wrong when that is so. I—I can't tell you how I have fought it. Of all men in the world, I feel that doctors ought to believe. And yet, I can't believe."

"When you united with the church you were in Mr. Houghton's class, I remember. Did he make you study?"

"He certainly did!" the young fellow responded, laughing in spite of his trouble. "You had to study if you were going to hold up your head in that class."

"And when he died, you kept on your Bible reading for a time, but it grew more and more perfunctory, and then you began to forget it altogether; and when you did take it up, you were bored. Is that it?"

"That is about it, sir."

"You are studying medicine. When you have your degree will you never look at your books again?"

The young fellow's face flamed. "I don't know what you mean, sir. A good doctor never stops studying. He has to keep up with every experiment, every discovery."

"And yet you expect, as a Christian, to take in enough Christianity in a year to last the rest of your life!"

"But it hasn't lasted; that's exactly the point."

"Certainly. That is the point with thousands of Christians in the Church today—lack of food. Have you studied your Bible to see what it has to say to doctors? Have you studied it to learn about human nature and the way to treat it? You keep up with the latest medical discoveries—have you laid out for yourself a course in the great discoveries of men whose work it is to interpret the word of God? Have you studied prayer as you have studied the nervous system? Have you ever put it all to practical tests, as you experiment in your laboratory? In other words, have you given God half a chance?"

The young man's face had cleared. He held out his hand.

"Thank you, sir," he said.

For Discussion. 1. The value of Bible study. Is the Bible being studied today?

2. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. The Bible will stand any honest searching. As Dr. Lynn H. Hough says, Prejudice is not its friend, but candid and deeply earnest investigation leads men to a deeper and truer acceptance of its message. Lincoln's advice: Try to comprehend as much as possible of this Book with your mind, and accept the rest on faith, and you will live and die a better man.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What do we learn about Paul from his letters which the Book of The Acts does not tell us? 2. When was this letter written, and what is its chronological order among the letters of Paul? 3. What proportion of this letter was of temporary and what is of permanent value? 4. Express in your own words what Paul writes in 1 Thess. 2.1-12.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
TURNING THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

Beginning the Lesson. Where is the city of Providence? Do you know who founded it? A writer in the Brown Alumni Monthly gives this account of the way in which Roger Williams came there:

In 1635 Roger Williams was summoned to appear before the general court at Salem to answer the charge of maintaining dangerous opinions. After what can hardly be termed a trial, he was adjudged guilty of having "broached and divulged diverse new and dangerous opinions against the authority of magistrates," and sentence of banishment was passed against him. He was granted leave to remain in Salem till spring, provided he would not "go about to draw others to his opinions," but as many resorted to his house to hear him it was held that he had violated the condition and he was ordered to go to Boston. As he declined to do so, Captain John Underhill was despatched with a sloop to Salem to arrest him, and to put him on ship for deportation to England. Receiving friendly warning, Williams left Salem in the night with two companions and fled through the wilderness. He passed the

rest of the winter on the banks of the Seekonk River, and in the spring with five companions he founded a new settlement which he named Providence "in grateful remembrance of God's merciful providence to me in my distress," as he said. At once an order was made that no one should be molested for his conscience, and in this humble way was founded the first commonwealth based on the great principle of perfect religious liberty.

I am sure that as you have been listening to this account you have been thinking how closely it parallels a certain experience of Paul. Who will tell it?

How John G. Paton Turned the World Upside Down. According to the Book of The Acts, the Apostle Paul and his companions on one occasion were thought to have been doing some very strange things, for it is recorded of them that in Thessalonica the people charged them with having "turned the world upside down."

One of those Christian missionaries who, like Paul, were trying to turn the world right side up, was Dr. John G. Paton. He tells in his Autobiography that once in the Island of Aniwa, where he labored for many years among a savage and heathen people, there had been no rain. So he resolved to dig a well in order to get water to drink. But the people had never seen such a thing as a well, and didn't know that water could be obtained from the ground. Consequently, when he told them his plans to go down into the earth for rain they thought that he had "gone wrong in his head." "What," they said, "are there clouds under the earth? Will the showers come up from below? No, Missi," they continued, "you will never see rain coming up from the earth. We expect you will drop through your hole into the sea and the sharks will eat you." But Dr. Paton labored on until at last he found good fresh water, having succeeded, you see, in turning a people's world upside down by bringing rain from clouds in the ground.

But on the next Sunday the Chief of the tribe, with a tomahawk in his hand, preached a sermon for Dr. Paton, declaring that "from this day we must believe all that Missi tells us concerning 'Jehovah God.'" Then the multitude brought their idols and destroyed them, and again a world was turned upside down. Instead of worshiping stones they knew of the same Father-God who is also our God.—Condensed from Wandering Stars, by Andrew Hansen.

When Things Must be Turned Upside Down. One day a man was planting beds of geraniums. It was tiring work and he grew hot and stiff, but at last it was finished. He rose up, straightened his cramped back, looked at his work with pride, and went indoors. A magpie had been watching, and now it hopped forward and looked at the neat beds. Evidently he thought something was wrong, for he went to each geranium and with a sharp tug pulled it out, planted it upside down, with its roots in the air—its leaves in the hole;—then, sitting with its head on the side, he looked at this new arrangement of it all as if saying to himself, "Ah! now that's a good deal better!"

The plants were really better the other way. It's usually a mistake to turn things upside down. But there are some things that must be turned upside down. The world, for instance. Paul looked out at it and saw that everyone was thinking of fame and riches and little of kindness and unselfishness. "That is wrong way up," he thought; "we must transpose it, make it think first of kindness and unselfishness and little of fame and riches."

And there is another thing, and that is your life, that is wrong end up. You think first of yourself and only then of other people. It ought to be the other way. It's usually a mistake to turn things upside down, but sometimes you must do it.—Condensed from The Expository Times.

Ancient and Modern Berœans. Our text tells us also about Paul's experiences in Berœa, where he went when he had to flee from Thessalonica. There the people listened to Paul's message with ready minds, and then what did they do? And what was the result?

In England there is a "Berœan Band" among the churches, every member of which is pledged to learn accurately at least one verse of the Bible each week. Here is what the Bishop of Durban once said to the members of the Band:

"Why should I make it my rule and my habit, as far as I can, to 'learn by heart' verses, passages, chapters, of the Bible, getting them printed on my mind word for word? I should do so because the practice is actually suggested in the Holy Scriptures. Look at Psalm 119. There in verse 11 (our Golden Text), you read how the Psalmist 'hid the Word in his heart.' That is, to turn the Hebrew phrase into English meaning, he stored it, he lodged it, in his thought. Practically, this comes to

what we mean by 'learning by heart,' if we take these words to imply not only memory, but the use of memory, for the soul's good.

"Let me bear witness for myself to the precious benefits of learning the Bible by heart. Almost my first distinct recollection of anything is the saying Christmas texts to my mother on Christmas day—at least sixty-one years ago. Then in later life I was encouraged to learn whole chapters and whole epistles, word for word. I think I could still say the Philippians through correctly in English and Greek, and large parts of Hebrews, and I still commit fresh portions to memory, particularly the Psalms.

"What is the benefit of it? First, I humbly believe the presence of all this Bible in the inner mind does tend, by Grace, to sweeten it, like lavender in a linen-chest. And then, in silent and solitary moments, walking by the way, lying awake at night, how beautiful it is to be able to listen to the very voice of God talking out of one's memory into the mind and soul! Ah, what a power it is to warn, to guide, to cheer! Many a moment that would be invaded by sin, or just withered by thoughts of sorrow, is turned into purity and hope by the verse, the psalm, the chapter, said 'by heart,' in silence or with sound. Thy Word have I stored in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.

"Learn your Bible. A 'step at a time,' a verse a day, or two verses, or ten, as your memory may serve; what a treasure you will gather up ere long! And the Lord of the Word will meet you through the Word, and make your memory his telephone for the very voice of Heaven."

Search the Scriptures Aright. When Jesus was accused of Sabbath-breaking because he cured the man at the Pool of Bethesda on that day, he defended his action, and among his words were these, as given in the Revised Version: "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me." Jesus needed not to counsel them to search the Scriptures. They knew them from childhood. "Men of the Book" they were afterwards called by the Arabs, because of their wonderful knowledge of the Old Testament. What they needed was to read their Scriptures aright, to understand them, to see that they pointed to him who was sent to reveal the Father to men.

The treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia was reading the prophet Isaiah as he rolled along in his chariot on his return journey from Jerusalem, where he had been to worship. He was reading the prophecy that points forward to the coming and suffering of the Redeemer. He had not seen and heard Jesus during his ministry on earth, he had not listened to the apostles as they proclaimed the Christ, he had no printed Gospels to make plain to him the meaning of what he read. He needed some one to explain the words. Very gladly he welcomed Philip and listened to him as he began from this Scripture and preached unto him Jesus. Thus he was brought to the One who is the source of Spiritual Life, and led to accept him and his gift. He had searched the Scriptures to the right purpose.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

"The Word is like a deep, deep mine,
And jewels rich and rare
Are hidden in its mighty depths
For every searcher there."

I have read the Bible morning, noon, and night, and have ever since been a happier and better man for such reading.—Edmund Burke.

There is no book that will so repay time spent on its pages as will the Word of God.—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

Read thou, but first thyself prepare
To read with zeal and mark with care;
And when thou read'st what here is writ,
Let thy best practice second it;
So twice each precept writ shall be,
First in the book and next in thee.—Peter Heylyn.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson.
1. Name Paul's letters in the order in which they are printed in the New Testament. 2. What message did Timothy bring Paul about the Thessalonians, as told in 1 Thess. 3.6? 3. What does verse 4 mean? 4. What are some of the things which Paul says he did not do among the Thessalonians? 5. What are some of the things which he says he did do there?

LESSON XII—SEPTEMBER 20

PAUL WRITES TO THE THESSALONIANS

GOLDEN TEXT: In everything give thanks. 1 Thessalonians 5.18

LESSON 1 Thessalonians 1 to 5

DEVOTIONAL READING 2 Thessalonians 2.13-17

1 THESSALONIANS 2 For yourselves, brethren, know our entering in unto you, that it hath not been found vain: 2 but having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as ye know, at Philippi, we waxed bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God in much conflict. 3 For our exhortation *is* not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: 4 but even as we have been approved of God to be intrusted with the gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts. 5 For neither at any time were we found using words of flattery, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness; 6 nor seeking glory of men, neither from you nor from others, when we might have claimed authority as apostles of Christ. 7 But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children: 8 even so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us. 9 For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. 10 Ye are witnesses, and God *also*, how holily and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe: 11 as ye know how we *dealt with* each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging *you*, and testifying, 12 to the end that ye should walk worthily of God, who calleth you into his own kingdom and glory.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. PAUL'S MOTIVES WERE GENUINE, verses 1, 2. "You yourselves, brothers, know that our mission to you was a success," Paul writes the Thessalonians. "Although at Philippi we had suffered greatly and had been insulted (recall the scourging and imprisonment there, lesson IX), yet on we came to your city and boldly declared to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition." Recall the words of Jesus in Mt. 10.23. "We waxed bold in our God," thus Paul asserts that the strength to persevere in spite of suffering was divinely given. And his argument here is that had his motives not been the best, he would not have preservered in his work under such untoward circumstances. "You never understand Paul aright," as Professor Ramsay says, "unless you estimate his action on the highest plane of human motives."

For the slanders which led Paul to make this defense of his motives and methods as a missionary, turn to the Suggestion for Beginning the Lesson, First Topic.

"Looked at as a whole, this passage warns us against slander. Paul was slandered; they said he was a very smart man, who looked well to his own interest and made dupes of simple people. The deliberate wickedness of such falsehoods is diabolical, but it is not so very rare. Numbers of people who would not invent such stories are glad to hear them. Be on your guard against sympathy with detraction. Never give utterance to a suspicious thought. Never repeat what would discredit a man, if you have only heard it and are not sure it is true; even if you are sure of its truth, be afraid of yourself if it gives you any pleasure to think of it. Love thinketh no evil; love rejoiceth not in iniquity" (Dr. James Denney).

II. WHAT PAUL'S PREACHING AND LIFE WERE NOT, verses 3-6. "For our exhortation is not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile," Paul declares. "For the appeal we make does not spring from any delusion or from impure motives —it does not work by cunning," is Moffatt's translation. Each of these phrases evidently refers to a charge that had been made against Paul by his enemies. "Paul was neither fool nor knave, neither deceived nor a deceiver. Nor was his mission a sordid attempt to make a good thing out of preaching, the impure motive being either to secure money or to gain a position of importance and popularity. Both features were only too familiar in the contemporary conduct of wandering sophists and thaumaturgists" (Dr. James Moffatt).

"But we proclaim the good news with which God has intrusted us; our object is not to please men with our rhetoric but to please God who tests our hearts. As God, who tests our hearts, has tested our fitness to be intrusted with the gospel—a characteristic play upon words—so we speak."

"Not for the eyes of men
May this day's work be done,
But unto thee, O God,
That with the setting sun,
My heart may know the matchless prize
Of sure approval in thine eyes" (Thomas Curtis Clark).

"The definite commission of the gospel excluded any weak attempt to flatter men's prejudices or to adapt oneself to their tastes—hence the thought of the following verse" (Dr. James Moffatt). "At no time, as you well know, did we resort to flattering words or words used as a covering to conceal avarice (God is our witness); nor did we seek glory of men, whether from you or from others, although we might have claimed authority as apostles of Christ." "Paul seems to have formed the habit of saying, 'I am not lying,' because he was always haunted with the fear that some one was distrusting his word. That was one of the crosses he had to bear. He is always calling God to witness that he is speaking the truth. He carried this too far. The only excuse for him is that he lived in an atmosphere poisoned by suspicion, and that his sensitive soul writhed under the insinuations that his words were not true" (Dr. Charles E. Jefferson).

"Paul speaks of 'a cloak of covetousness'; he did not make his apostolic labors a veil, under cover of which he could gratify his love of gain. It is impossible to exaggerate the subtle and clinging character of this vice. It owes its strength to the fact that it can be so easily cloaked. We seek money, so we tell ourselves, not because we are covetous, but because it is a power for all good purposes. Piety, charity, humanity, refinement, art, science—it can minister to them all; but when we obtain it, it is too easily hoarded, or spent in indulgence and display."

"A minister whose congregation is the theater on which he displays his talents or his eloquence is not a Christian. A clever man, to whom the men and women whom he meets in society are merely specimens of human nature on which he can make shrewd observations, sharpening his wits on them as on a grindstone, is not a Christian. A man of business, who looks at the laborers whom he employs as only so many instruments for rearing the fabric of his prosperity, is not a Christian. Such men bring disgrace on the religion which they wear merely as a blind" (Dr. James Denney).

III. WHAT PAUL'S PREACHING AND LIFE WERE, verses 7-12. "Rutherford happily renders verse seven thus: 'On the contrary, we carried ourselves among you with a childlike simplicity, as a mother becomes a child again when she fondles her children.'" Dr. G. Campbell Morgan prefers the reading given in our Revised Version, "as when a nurse cherisheth her own children," and says the conception is that of the merging of trained intelligent skill with natural mother-love, that of a nurse and a mother. "A nurse may have real skill, and even be scientifically devoted to her charges, but all this leaves something lacking which is found in motherhood. On the other hand, mothers whose love and devotion are undoubted, have often wronged their children through ignorance. Given a nurse with her own children, and the ideal is realized. Paul said that this was his attitude toward his spiritual children."

"You are not very holy if you are not very kind" (Bonar).

"We were fain, in our yearning affection for you, to impart not only the gospel of God to you but our very souls as well—you had so won our love" (Moffatt's translation). "Paul had been accused of seeking gain and glory when he came among them; but his sole desire had been not to get but to give. As his stay was prolonged, the disciples became very dear to their teacher; 'We were well pleased to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls.' That is the true standard of pastoral care. The apostle lived up to it always. 'Now we live,' he writes in the next chapter, 'if ye stand fast in the Lord.' 'Ye are in our hearts,' he cries to the Corinthians, 'to live together and to die together.' He not only kept back from them nothing of the whole purpose of God; he kept back no part of himself" (Dr. James Denney).

"You remember, brethren, how we worked day and night to support ourselves; while we preached unto you the gospel of God; for we would not be a burden to any of you." Compare Acts. 18.3; 1 Cor. 4.12. By the phrase "night and day," Paul meant that he began work before dawn in order to have part of the day for preaching.

"You are witnesses, and God is also, of how pious, righteous and blameless was our behavior while with you."

Not of Paul the apostle and preacher of righteousness alone, but of all Christians, God and just men should be able to testify that they behave towards others holily, righteously and unblamably. A high goal—can it be reached? Although no one is sinless, yet all can be better Christians, more useful to the Master. Let us press on toward the mark of our high calling in Christ Jesus.

"You know how we treated each of you as a father treats his own children, exhorting you and encouraging you, and bearing witness, for the sake of leading you to walk worthily of God, who calls you to his own kingdom and glory."

"If this exhortation was true for them, how much more for us! The question for us is not merely, Is this wrong? Is this course likely to impair my standing or my fortune? But, Is it worthy of God, and of my union with him, and of the nobility of character which becomes his child and heir? How many sins and mistakes should we be saved from, if this were always our first inquiry!" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What were Paul's experiences at Philippi? Who were his enemies at Thessalonica?

From Berœa to Athens and Corinth. The hostile Jews of Thessalonica followed Paul to Berœa and aroused such antagonism to him among the Jews there that Paul departed for Athens, leaving Silas and Timothy to continue the work at Berœa. After Athens, Paul went on to Corinth, and during his stay there of a year and a half he wrote his two Epistles to the Thessalonians.

The First Epistle to the Thessalonians. Paul had longed to revisit Thessalonica, but he was "hindered by Satan"—perhaps he feared lest his return would bring trouble to Jason. In his stead he sent Timothy to "strengthen them," 1 Thess. 3.1-5. Timothy reported to Paul at Corinth the faith and loyalty of the Thessalonians, and also the fact that many of them had given up their work to idly await Christ's second coming, which they believed near, and that others were anxious about the state of their dead. To correct the error and to comfort the mourners, as well as to exhort all to right living and to assure them of his continued interest in their welfare, Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians. It is throughout intimate and personal in character.

The First Epistle to the Thessalonians is the earliest of Paul's writings which have been preserved, and probably the first written of all the books of the New Testament. The exact date of the letter depends on the system of chronology followed. It may have been 53 A. D.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"The trouble with Miss S——," said an earnest Church-school worker recently, "is that all her splendid church work is done solely from personal ambition. She gives of her time freely in calling upon the members of her class and upon prospects in order that her class may grow; but this she does, not that the class may be helpful to larger and larger numbers, but that she may be known as the teacher of the largest Bible Class in the city."

Paul declares that he was actuated in his Christian work by no unworthy motives, but having been found worthy by God to be intrusted with the Good News, therefore he told it, aiming always to please God in the telling. Never at any time did he make false professions in order to hide selfish aims. Never did he seek to win honor from men.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE SPIRIT AND METHOD OF PAUL'S WORK

Beginning the Lesson. The twelve verses which form our text today have been called Paul's *Apologia pro vita sua,* his defense of his life. Professor James Denny reasons thus as to the definite purpose which the apostle had in appealing so pointedly as he does to facts with which his readers were familiar:

"Although he does not name them, it is quite plain that he was suffering from the Jews, those enemies who never ceased to vex him while he lived. When they had opportunity, they used open violence; they roused the Gentile mob against him; they had him scourged and stoned. When his body was out of their reach, they assailed him through his character and affections. They crept into the churches which his love and zeal had gathered here and there, and scattered injurious suspicions against him among his disciples. He was not, they hinted, all that he seemed to be. They could tell stories about his early days, and advised those who did not know him so well to be on their guard. Evangelizing paid him quite as well as harder work and his paltry ambition was gratified by lording it over his ignorant converts.

"Such messengers of Satan had evidently made their appearance in Thessalonica since Paul left, and this chapter is his reply to their insinuations. There is something exquisitely painful in the situation thus created. It would have been like a sword piercing the apostle's heart, had his enemies succeeded in their attempt to breed distrust in the Thessalonians toward him. He could not have borne to think that those whom he loved so utterly should entertain the faintest suspicion of the integrity of his love. But happily he is spared that pain. He writes, indeed, as one who has felt the indignity of the charges brought against him, but with the frankness and heartiness of a man who is confident that his defense will be well received. From baseless insinuations he can appeal to facts which are well known to all. From the false character in which he has been dressed by his adversaries he can appeal to the true, in which he lived and moved familiarly among them."

Learning to Appreciate Paul. Do you imagine that Paul began at Thessalonica with brilliant, spectacular preaching? No. The first thing was to look for lodgings, and the next to look for work in some tentmaker's shop to cover the expenses of support and traveling. It is only as I look closely into his life that I realize what a hero Paul was. In the keen strain of clerical life I wonder how long I should stand it if I had to sit up at night to cut and stretch tent cloth to earn my breakfast—if I had a chronic disease—if I was persecuted and disliked—and if I varied the monotony by getting stoned or flogged once a year. I might do it for the sake of some one whom I greatly loved. It helps me to see how much a man can do who is intensely in earnest. It helps me to estimate how deep was this man's love of the Lord who had been so good to him on the Damascus Road. These months of study are helping me to appreciate and admire Paul as I never did before.—Dr. J. Paterson-Smyth.

An Ancient Pulpit at Thessalonica from Which Tradition Says Paul Preached

The Spirit and Method of Paul's Work. See The Text Explained.

Paul Shepherded his Flock. When Paul made converts in a city, he did not at once leave the place forever. He went back to it. He walked back to it, even though it were a hundred miles. How patiently he trod those long and wearisome distances which stretched from one city to another! Why did he go back? Because his work was not yet completed. The work of a herald is of slight value unless it is supplemented by the long continued labor of other men. There must be a work of teaching and administration and of shepherding, if men are to be saved. Salvation does not come

by the simple hearing of a sermon. A man may start on the way of moral recovery by listening to a message which grips his heart, but everything depends on his going on. Evangelists have too often forgotten this. They have exulted in blowing the trumpet calling men to battle, and have overlooked the importance of the patient drudgery of drilling men to meet the enemy in the field. Paul's advance from Antioch in Pisidia to Derbe was glorious, but it was not a whit more glorious than his journey from Derbe back to Antioch.

On going east, Paul had made converts, but on his way west he "strengthened the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to hold by the faith, and telling them that men have to get into the Kingdom of God through many a trouble." It takes courage to make converts, but it takes both courage and patience to organize the converts into churches with officers to administer the affairs of the congregation, and to train the beginning believers in the principles of Christian living.—Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, in The Character of Paul.

When the Needle Fails to Point True. One night off the Irish coast during the war a steamer was torpedoed. The boats were provisioned and dropped over the side, and in the captain's boat was placed a small machine gun for protection. The boat carried also the ship's compass, and the captain instructed the other craft to follow him as he laid his course toward land.

But late in the afternoon the captain began to suspect that the needle was not pointing north. For a little while he was puzzled; and then he understood. The machine gun was affecting the needle. Only when they had reluctantly dropped the weapon overboard—for there was no room for it in the other boats—did they find a course that brought them to land.

How often in life something that we insist on taking unto ourselves solely for protection influences the delicate needle of conscience so that it no longer points true! For example, there is money. Most of us in laying out the course of our life feel sure that we must include it, for money is such a comforting protection against so many woes and ailments. Yet how many times under its subtle appeal the needle of conscience swings away from the ideal of strict honesty or truthfulness or generosity to which God intended it to point!

And there is the desire for popularity; it is a natural desire, but it carries with it the temptation to sacrifice principle, to surrender a high conviction or a righteous ideal in order to get more of it. It is true that popular people have power of a certain kind, and on many occasions power is a great protection; but we must be sure not to pay too much for it. For the great end of life is not money or popularity or power; it is character. Whatever keeps us from attaining it would better be thrown overboard. Before the voyage is finished we shall thank God we have been wise enough to make the sacrifice.—The Youth's Companion.

For Discussion. 1. As some one has said, the church at Thessalonica was born in a revival, but the financial aspect was not to the fore. Is it true, as has been claimed, that modern evangelists attach too much importance to the compensation which they will receive and thus seriously cripple their influence?

2. Paul's courtesy and tact in his letters including his co-workers with him. The epistle begins as though the words of Silas and Timothy as well as of Paul. Paul believed in letting those who shared with him the labor and the peril share also in the honor.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
PAUL'S DEVOTION TO HIS WORK

Beginning the Lesson. During the Great War, Salonica, ancient Thessalonica, was often pictured in the illustrations from the scenes of battle, a beautiful old town nestling among the mountains by the sea, with fortifications on the hills behind. "It would be interesting," wrote Dr. J. Paterson-Smyth, "if I could show the British gunners today the path right between their guns where Paul and Silas, sore from the flogging at Philippi, came down that summer morning long ago into the town."

Last week we studied Luke's narrative of how Paul came to Thessalonica, what he preached, who received his message, and how his enemies forced him to leave the city. Who will tell what Luke says? Today we have an extract from Paul's first letter to the church which he founded at Thessalonica.

Paul's Success with his Work. One would expect the little church to die out when its great leaders are gone. Far from it. Here we see the innate power of the

gospel as Christ predicted. "The Word is like seed," he says, "sown in the ground." Like seed. For the seed has in it a hidden life, you cannot hold it back. It must grow. Throw a handful of seeds on the ground and neglect them. They will grow. Throw a few acorns, pile up rocks to keep them down, they will force up their way and wedge open the rocks. You cannot hold down a seed with the life germ in it. So Paul's little group of converts by the power of the Holy Spirit grew and flourished and rejoiced in the Lord. They would seem even to have spread the gospel in the districts around.

The Thessalonians show the quickest growth of any church we know. Only a couple of months later Paul wrote his first epistle to them in great delight. Two months ago they were degraded idolaters, he says, who turned from idols to serve the living God. Now already "the word of the Lord hath sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia. In every place your faith towards God has gone forth."

Let us believe more in the power of that living seed. Let us put more heart and hope into our missionary efforts, for we are sowing the seed of eternal life and nothing can stop it. It has the life in itself.—Dr. J. Paterson-Smyth, in The Story of St. Paul's Life and Letters.

Paul Dictating his Letters to the Thessalonians. One day a shadow falls through the door of the workshop; Paul looks up from his tentmaking to see Silas and Timothy standing at the door! News at last from Salonica! And it is delightful news that Timothy brings. "They are unshaken in their faith. They are making fine progress. The heathen are impressed by them. And they have the kindliest feelings for you, Paul. They are most affectionate about you and are longing to see you again." It was a great delight to Paul. "I live again," he says, "when ye stand fast in the Lord."

I see Timothy telling the news. I watch the eagerness of Paul and the quick changes on his face as he listens.

"O Timothy, I wish I could go to them this moment! But I cannot with this growing congregation so eager in Corinth. Look here, go down to the artist's shop in the next street and buy sheets of papyrus. We will write them a letter."

That was a happy thought for the world. Thus began the most important stage in Paul's great life work. Thus began the making of the New Testament.

There was no Bible except the Old Testament. Not a page of our Gospels was written yet—nor for nearly twenty years afterwards. It is a curious fact. One would have expected that the first thing Christians would do after Pentecost would be to go to the apostles and say to them, Write us down in a book at once everything that you have seen and heard and learned about Jesus in those wonderful three years. But they did not. You see they were not accustomed to books. They did not want books. Most of them could not read. Their whole training had been oral. Their knowledge of a thing had always come by hearsay. There were no newspapers.

So the first Christian writings were the Epistles of St. Paul, and first of them all was this letter to the Thessalonians, called forth by the simple necessities of the moment. We believe that the Holy Ghost was inspiring Paul. And we believe that he guided him to write not formal treatises, but simple, natural, unconventional letters such as we should have written ourselves today to our soldier boys, when they were in this same Salonica.

Paul wrote straight from the heart. This gives that vivid freshness of style, that intenseness and sincerity and personal touch. A formal book would never have moved the world as these letters have done. Take away the traces of passion, the stern denunciation, the affectionate entreaties, the frank colloquialism, the personal details, and you would never have had the grip of these writings on the soul of the world. God guided Paul to write simple, natural letters, and when you read them keep that in mind.

Paul and Silas and Timothy are in the shabby workshop after hours. They have bought the papyrus sheets in the artist's shop around the corner. Parchment was not used for letters. In any case it would be too dear for poor people. But they could buy papyrus sheets in the shops as we buy foolscap from six to eighteen inches wide and of any length required. We know this from the papyri that have been discovered.

Paul is dictating the letter while he works. Busy people then as now dictated when they could instead of writing, and perhaps Paul's weak eyes made it more necessary in his case. At any rate, we know that it was his custom. Then at the close he would scrawl in a few words of blessing or remembrance with his name, "which is my token," he says, "in every epistle." This dictation gives much of the

vividness in his letters, the broken sentences, the frequent interruptions of his thought. They are just his rapid thoughts taken down as they arise. I think Silas is the writer, for I find him afterwards acting as writer in the epistle of Peter (1 Peter, 5.12). Now listen to Paul dictating:

"Paul and Silvanus"—(Silas is short for Silvanus, but Paul is a dignified person and calls men by their full names). "Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the Church of the Thessalonians, grace be to you and peace."

"But," I hear Silas say, "Paul, this is your letter—our names should not appear."

"No, Silvanus, it is our letter. We feel the same about our friends in Thessalonica."

I like to think of the kindliness, and modesty, and generous courtesy of the man associating his subordinates as equals with himself. And I think, too, how little these two thought that day that they were writing in that mean little workroom the first words of the great Christian Scriptures for all ages to come.

First, he must let them know how glad he is: "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father."

Then he changes the note. He is thinking of all the slanders of his enemies about him, that he was not a real apostle like the others, that he had some self-seeking purpose, that this collecting of money for the poor looked suspicious, etc. "You know it is not true," he says.

"God is my witness that I did not hide covetousness under fair pretences . . . that I did not seek anything from you. You remember how I worked night and day that I might not burden any of you, while I proclaimed the glad tidings of God.

"I am longing to see you again. I tried to get to you, but I could not. I have been very anxious about you. When I was left in Athens alone, I sent Timothy to inquire about you. He has only just come back with the happy news, and I am greatly comforted.

"For I live again if ye be steadfast in the Lord."

Then comes his tender thought of them mourning for their dead, and troubled because their dear ones have missed the second coming. With deep sympathy he dictates that classic passage, the comfort of countless mourners in all the ages since:

"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope."

Next comes a little set of short practical exhortations.

"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. Continue to give thanks whatever be your lot. Quench not the spirit. Keep clear of every form of evil."

Now I see him scrawling in the conclusion of the letter himself in his own handwriting:

"May the God of peace sanctify you wholly and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the offering of our Lord Jesus Christ. God will fulfil my prayer for you. And, brethren, pray ye for me. See that this letter be read to all the brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

I wish you would read that letter through at one sitting. You can do it in fifteen minutes. And as you read it, call up in your mind that poor tentmaker dictating it with the joy of God in his heart, and the tender, solicitous sympathy for the friends he loved. Put yourself in his place. Put life and heart into it. Make it real.—Condensed from The Story of St. Paul's Life and Letters, by Dr. J. Paterson-Smyth.

Be Dependable. There are some people in God's army whose names might be on the ugly roll of the deserters. There are boys and girls, sometimes, who have promised to be Christ's faithful soldiers and servants until their life's end; and then one day when they get into a group of other boys and girls who are saying or planning something that is wrong and mean, they desert their colors and do wrong, too. Certainly there is not one of us who would want to be written down in a list like that. What we do want is that God may always count on us to be among his soldiers, ready for duty—soldiers who can be depended upon to do what is right and be faithful every day.—W. Russell Bowie, in The Children's Year.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Whatever I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely; in great aims and in small I have always been thoroughly in earnest.—Charles Dickens.

"You're busy? Chipmunks darting in and out
The wall are busy, too—but what about?"

REVIEW—FROM ANTIOCH OF SYRIA TO BERŒA

GOLDEN TEXT: Whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory. 1 Peter 1.8

DEVOTIONAL READING 1 Peter 4.12-19

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS: THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL
TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS: HOW THE GOSPEL SPREAD

Lesson I: The First Foreign Missionaries. As a little group of Christians were praying in Antioch of Syria, God's will was made known to them. They realized that he had called Paul and Barnabas for the special work of preaching the gospel to peoples in other lands. The church at Antioch had been blessed in having the gospel brought to them, and they were glad to share this blessing with others, just as they had been glad to share their food with the poor in Jerusalem during the famine.

After fasting and praying and laying on of hands, the little Christian community sent these two foreign missionaries on their way. Thus the great movement for the evangelization of the world began. Paul and Barnabas set sail from the port of Seleucia for the island of Cyprus. They landed at Salamis, and after preaching there crossed the island to Paphos.

Paphos was the home of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. He desired to hear the word of God, but Elymas, a sorcerer, endeavored to dissuade him from believing. Paul vigorously accused Elymas of being the enemy of all righteousness; the hand of the Lord was upon him, Paul further declared, and he should be blind for a season. The eyes of Elymas were at once darkened, and he asked to be led by the hand. The astonished proconsul believed the teaching of the Lord.

How do you think the Holy Spirit said, "I want Paul and Barnabas to spread the gospel?" "Do not imagine he spoke as I am speaking to you," Dr. J. H. Jowett answers. "It was a prepared church; prepared so as to be able to discern. It had a certain refinement of mood by which it was able to apprehend and appreciate the mind of God. They met for worship, for prayer and for praise. To that church, prepared by discipline, spiritually and morally, came a divine call and a divine commission; and that commission marks the second great decisive movement in the evangelization of the world."

Lesson II: The Gospel a Savor of Life unto Life or of Death unto Death. From Paphos Paul and his company sailed for the peninsula we now call Asia Minor. At Perga in Pamphylia, John Mark, Paul's attendant, returned to Jerusalem, and Paul and Barnabas journeyed northward to Pisidian Antioch.

On the Sabbath in the synagogue the ruler called upon Paul and Barnabas to address the congregation. Paul accepted the invitation. Beckoning with his hand the signal for attention, he spoke upon the theme that has been well called "God's greatest gift to us." He began by recalling the glories of Israel's past, from Moses to David, and recounting God's goodness to them, especially his promise of a Savior; next he told them that Jesus, who was announced by John as the Savior, had fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures by his death and resurrection; and then he urged them to accept the Christ, for in no other way could they be saved. He closed with a prophecy of Habakkuk, bidding them beware lest in rejecting this salvation they call down upon themselves as severe a judgment as that inflicted by the Chaldean armies on the Jewish nation when it refused to heed Habakkuk's warning.

The people were greatly impressed, and they asked the missionaries, as they were leaving, to address them again the following Sabbath. Many Jews and proselytes followed them at the close of the service and sought further instruction.

The report of the new doctrine spread during the week, and on the following Sabbath a great crowd assembled in the synagogue. Jewish leaders were infuriated at the sight of the multitudes; they themselves had won only a few proselytes, and now "the whole city" was eager to listen to this stranger! Jealousy, and doubtless anger at Paul's free offering of salvation to the Gentiles, filled their hearts, and they began to contradict everything that Paul said, and to revile him.

Their rage convinced Paul and Barnabas that henceforth their chief work must be among the Gentiles, and this fact they boldly proclaimed. The gospel had been spoken first to the Jews, but by rejecting it the Jews had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles," solemnly Paul said, and quoted a Messianic prophecy from Isaiah, thereby implying that Jesus is the light set for the salvation of the Gentiles, and that they were carrying out his work in hearing his message to the uttermost part of the earth.

The Gentiles rejoiced and glorified God, and the work spread throughout that region. The hostile Jews stirred up the influential women, the latter stirred up the chief men, and together they brought about the banishment of Paul and Barnabas. Shaking the dust from their feet in token of their intention of having nothing more to do with their enemies, the apostles went on to Iconium. The disciples of Antioch proved the genuineness of their religion in this time of trial; they were filled with joy, for they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Lesson III: Missionary Victories and Tribulations. When Paul and Barnabas were preaching at Lystra, they had among their listeners a cripple who had been lame from birth. Paul noticed his eager attention and believed that he had faith to be made whole. "Stand upright on thy feet," he commanded him, and the cripple at once leaped up and walked. So astonished were the people who saw him that they declared Paul and Barnabas must be gods in human form; Barnabas, the more reserved, being their chief god, Jupiter; and Paul, the chief speaker, being Mercury, the god of eloquence. In their excitement they used their native Lycaonian dialect, instead of Greek which was the universal language in the Roman Empire at this time. Evidently Paul and Barnabas did not understand their shouts, and returned to their abiding place. The news was brought to the priest of Jupiter, whose temple stood before the city. Sacrifice must be offered before these gods, instead of in the temple area, he at once decided, and had the oxen, gaily decorated with garlands for the sacrifice, brought in solemn procession to the temple gates.

Rending their garments as they ran in token of their horror at the sacrilege, Paul and Barnabas rushed into the crowd as soon as they learned their intention, and Paul cried out: "Why do ye these things? We are human beings, men of the same nature as you, and come to you with good tidings, seeking to turn you from those vain gods and temples and sacrifices to the true God, the Maker of heaven and earth and sea and all things in them." Until now God has left them to their own ways, and yet they had not been wholly without knowledge of him, for his gifts had borne witness to him, his rains and fruitful seasons had furnished them food and brought them gladness, Paul reminded them. With difficulty Paul restrained the people from offering sacrifice to him.

Provoked with themselves, doubtless, for having made a mistake in offering undue honor to Paul, the people were easily persuaded to turn against him by the hostile Jews of Antioch and Iconium who had come on to Lystra to persecute him. They stoned Paul. Supposing him to be dead they dragged his body outside of the city walls. As the disciples stood around him mourning, Paul arose. He entered the city, and the next day went on with Barnabas to preach at Derbe.

Every effort to silence Paul always resulted in stirring him on to even greater zeal, if possible. So it was with George Whitefield (Dr. J. D. Jones draws the parallel), who, when denied the church, preached in the churchyard, and when driven from the churchyard betook himself to the open space of Moorfields, and whose answer to a mob of thirty thousand people who came with stones and rotten eggs to stop his preaching at Moorfields one morning was the announcement that he would preach there again at six o'clock in the evening.

Lesson IV: A Great Controversy Settled. News of the reception of Gentiles into the churches founded by Paul aroused the anger of certain members of the Judean Church, and they came to Antioch in Syria and told the church that unless all were circumcised according to the custom of Moses, they could not be saved. After much discussion the church appointed a committee consisting of Paul and Barnabas and others to take the matter up with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem.

Must Gentiles become Jews before they could be received into the Church? Was the new religion to be an appendix to the old, or was it to break away from it altogether? It was a serious moment in the Church Council at Jerusalem. Then Peter said: "God through me gave the gospel to Gentiles. God makes no distinction between them and us, and wherefore should we put a new yoke upon them?" Paul and Barnabas told of the wonderful work wrought by God among the Gentiles. Then James said: "My judgment is that we should not trouble these Gentiles who

turn to God, but ask them only to abstain from four things" which were abhorent to the Jews.

The words of Peter, Paul and James won the day. A letter was written to the church at Antioch which commended Paul and Barnabas, and recounted the unanimous decision reached in the matter under controversy. It brought great rejoicing in Antioch.

Diversities of opinions as to church management or questions of faith need not involve any cleavage. Christians honest and true may differ widely, but when they discuss questions in the right spirit they are enabled to distinguish the difference between the essential and the non-essential.

The spread of Christianity in the first centuries was made easy through the use by the missionaries of the Roman roads built to facilitate the passage of troops from one part of the great empire to the other. At the rate at which railroads are building in China nowadays, it will not be many years before Christian missionaries will find it easy to penetrate to all parts of that empire, carrying the Bible with them.

Lesson V: Religion according to James. Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to be angry—for human anger does not promote divine righteousness; so clear away all the foul, rank growth of malice; and make a soil of modesty for the Word which roots itself inwardly with power to save your souls. Act on the Word, instead of merely listening to it, and deluding yourselves. For whoever listens and does nothing, is like a man who glances at his natural face in a mirror; he glances at himself, goes off, and at once forgets what he was like. Whereas he who gazes into the faultless law of freedom and remains in that position, proving himself to be no forgetful listener but an active agent, he will be blessed in his activities. Whoever considers he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his own heart, his religion is futile. Pure, unsoiled religion in the judgment of God the Father means this: to care for orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself from the stain of the world.—Moffatt's Translation.

Certain species of birds are provided with tiny glands in the skin, which keep their feathers covered with an invisible oil. Soot will not stick to them. They have an invisible armor. There are insects which dwell in the mud at the bottom of roadside pools, yet remain as bright as burnished brass. They are provided with suction glands which interpose a stratum of dry air between them and the world about them. Air is their armor. Is it possible that creatures of this sort are protected against contamination and we left helpless against our enemies? Is the soul of man left unguarded against the forces that mar its beauty? Do not believe it! The God of nature is the God of grace. He demands holiness. Holiness is only another name for unspottedness. He does not require the impossible. Christianity offers us the means by which we may preserve our souls' integrity." We may keep ourselves unspotted from the world.—Dr. Charles Carroll Albertson.

Lesson VI: New Recruits for the Second Missionary Journey. After spending some time at Antioch in Syria, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us revisit the cities where we founded churches and see how they are prospering." This seemed good to Barnabas, but he wished to take John Mark. Paul remembered how Mark had left them in the lurch on the former journey, and was not willing to try him again. They could not agree, so Barnabas took Mark with him to Cyprus, and Paul chose Silas for a companion and went through Syria and the Province of Cilicia and on to Derbe and Lystra. At Lystra Paul gained a new recruit in Timothy, whose father was a Greek and mother a Jewess. They continued their journey, encouraging and strengthening the churches in the faith.

Lesson VII: Paul's Words to the Galatians about Temperance. Brothers, you were called to be free; only, do not make your freedom an opening for the flesh, but serve one another in love. For the entire Law is summed up in one word, in *You must love your neighbor as yourself* (whereas, if you snap at each other and prey upon each other, take care in case you destroy one another).

I mean, lead the life of the Spirit; then you will never satisfy the passions of the flesh. For the passion of the flesh is against the Spirit, and the passion of the Spirit against the flesh—the two are at issue, so that you are not free to do as you please. If you are under the sway of the Spirit you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are quite obvious, such as sexual vice, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, magic, quarrels, dissension, jealousy, temper, rivalry, factions, party-spirit, envy, drinking bouts, revelry, and the like. I tell you beforehand as I have told you already, that people who indulge in such practices will never inherit the Realm of God.

But the harvest of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, good temper, kindliness, generosity, fidelity, gentleness, self-control:—there is no law against those who practice such things. Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its emotion and passions.—Moffatt's Translation.

Lesson VIII: From Asia to Europe. After going through the regions of Phrygia and Galatia, Paul was hindered from going into the Province of Asia on the west to preach. Going northward to the borders of the Province of Mysia he determined to keep on into Bithynia, but again his plans were thwarted. Perplexed in mind, he passed through Mysia without preaching and reached Troas on the sea. There in a vision at night he saw a man from Macedonia standing before him, urging him to come over into Macedonia and help them. This, then, was God's plan for him. At once he made arrangements for his journey. In two days' time he and his companions sailed from Troas to the island of Samothrace and thence to Neapolis, and then went on foot ten miles inland to Philippi.

"There is nothing in the New Testament more dramatic than the great missionary's silent journeying across Asia," writes the Rev. F. W. Boreham. "He set his face towards the evangelization of the stately commercial capitals of the Eastern world. But in each place he was 'forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the word,' and trudged on in silence. 'The Spirit suffered him not.' As the Quakers would say, 'There was a stop in the mind against it.' And the result of Paul's implicit obedience to that mysterious inward restraint was—*Europe!* It shifted the balance of power, and altered the face of the world. As Benjamin Kidd has demonstrated, the great western empires sprang out of that extraordinary silence, that mystical submission."

On the Sabbath days in Philippi the occupations of the city went on as usual. "Roman soldiers were on parade, women were coming in from the country to market, the shopkeepers were at their business, the magistrates were administering justice; and then, as the evening came on, there was general, and not very innocent amusement. Meantime Lydia and other godly women sought out a quiet place by the river, retired from the distractions of the town, and prayed"; and there Paul met them and taught them. Lydia and her household believed and were baptized. At her urgent request Paul and the others made her house their home, and it became the headquarters of the first church in Europe.

There is much encouragement in this event. Here was something very modest in its beginning, but very large in its results.

Lesson IX: In Bondage. For many days Paul and Silas were troubled by a soothsaying maid who followed them, crying out that they were the servants of the Most High God. When she was dispossessed of her powers and no longer able to bring her masters gain, the latter sought revenge for their loss. They seized Paul and Silas and brought them before the city magistrates, accusing them as Jews of setting forth customs not lawful for Romans to observe. The magistrates ordered the missionaries beaten and imprisoned. The jailor put them in the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Although suffering greatly Paul and Silas were bravely singing hymns when at midnight, as if in answer to their need, an earthquake threw open the prison doors and loosed their bonds. The affrighted jailor was about to kill himself, for he was responsible for his prisoners, when Paul's voice assured him that none had escaped. "What must I do to be saved?" the trembling jailor cried, and Paul answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"; and then he explained to him and those with him, about Jesus the Christ. After the jailor had cleansed the wounds caused by their beating, Paul baptized him and his household.

At dawn the magistrates sent word that Paul and Silas were to be released, but Paul indignantly said they were Roman citizens who had been punished uncondemned; they would not be sent away unacquitted. Such violation of the law rendered the magistrates liable to death, and affrighted and troubled they came and besought the missionaries to leave the city. Thus, not as fugitives from justice, but as freed men Paul and Silas left the prison, and after tarrying awhile with the church at Lydia's home, they left the city for Thessalonica.

Lesson X: Paul Writes to the Philippians. Paul had a special affection for the church which he founded at Philippi, and he wrote them from Rome a beautiful letter. In it he told them what Christ meant to him. The things which once he had rated most highly, he now thought of as less than nothing in comparison with the importance of his knowledge of Christ the Lord. And indeed, he had suffered many things for the sake of Christ, but it mattered not to him, for he was bent upon one

quest alone, the winning of Christ and the being united with Christ. He desired not a righteousness which he had acquired by his own efforts, but a righteousness which is from God through loving, trusting and obeying Christ his Son. He longed intensely to know Christ and to feel the influence upon himself of Christ's resurrection, to experience the fellowship of Christ's suffering, to follow Christ even to death.

Paul was not content with his Christian attainment, he was not perfect, but he was eagerly advancing, seeking to clasp the hand of Christ even as Christ had clasped his on the way to Damascus. No, he had not yet attained to perfection, yet this one thing he was doing, banishing from his mind all that was past and eagerly looking at what was before, like a racer he was straining every nerve to reach the goal and win the prize of the heavenly life with Christ Jesus.

Let us all, he counseled, who have really attained to a deep knowledge of Christ, think in this way: those who are not so minded, God will enlighten: only all must faithfully practice the truth already grasped.

"The significance of a race depends upon the worth of the goal. Men do not run for something that is not worth while. When we speak of our life work as a 'vocation,' we are using the very term that Paul employed to describe his own work in the world. He says that he received it from God, and that it is high and noble. Is not that the privilege of every one now? Ought we not to think of the work that we are doing as the service and duty to which God has called us? Surely, if we did it would add aim and dignity and joy to the daily tasks which are sometimes monotonous. It would keep us brave and steadfast in many an experience which we sometimes shrink from meeting."

Toward the close of his letter, Paul wrote these beautiful words: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." And if the slightest temptation comes to us to do or say anything untrue or dishonorable or unjust or unlovely, let us recall Paul's words and let our minds dwell upon them until they bear fruit in word and in action.

Lesson XI: At Thessalonica and Berœa. From Philippi Paul and Silas journeyed to Thessalonica, the capital of Macedonia. Here in the Jewish synagogue on three successive sabbaths Paul reasoned with the Jews, appealing to the Old Testament Scriptures to prove that the Christ must suffer and rise again from the dead (a doctrine that was ever to the Jews a "stumbling-block"), and that Jesus, whom he proclaimed to them, fulfilled the prophecies and therefore is the Christ. The result was that some Jews, a great multitude of Greeks, and many of the chief women, believed. Next we hear that the jealous, unbelieving Jews stirred up a riot, and with a great rabble mobbed the home of Jason.

Since Paul and Silas were not to be found, they seized Jason and others and charged them before the rulers of the city with sedition and treason. Jason had received missionaries who had "turned the world upside down." What a striking testimony was this to the influence of Christianity! The rulers allowed Jason and the others to go free, after taking security from them to keep the peace.

To prevent trouble coming to their friends, Paul and Silas left and went on to Berœa. In Berœa they received a fair hearing from the Jews in the synagogue, for, unlike the Jews of Thessalonica, they did not pre-judge Paul's message, but listened to him with openmindedness. They examined the Scriptures and found that they agreed with Paul's words, and many of them believed as did also many of the Greeks, both men and women.

Then the Jews of Thessalonica heard of Paul's success at Berœa and came on to stir up trouble for him there also. Paul was sent by the brethren to sea and accompanied to Athens.

There have always been men like these Jews in every age and in every land who have delighted in "stirring up" others. There is no community free from such tormentors. Again and again citizens of the United States have tried to stir up trouble, for which there was no warrant, between our country and Japan, and if war could have been brought about they would have rejoiced. Again and again workers in various trades have been contented with their work and their wages, and then professional agitators have come and stirred up trouble until the workers have gone out on strike.

Lesson XII: Paul Writes to the Thessalonians. But you remember yourselves, brothers, that our visit to you was no failure. At Philippi, as you know, we had been ill-treated and insulted, but we took courage and confidence in our God

to tell you the gospel of God in spite of all the strain. For the appeal we made does not spring from any delusion or from impure motives—it does not work by cunning; no, God has attested our fitness to be entrusted with the gospel, and so we tell the gospel not to satisfy men but to satisfy the God who tests our hearts. We never resorted to flattery (you know that), nor to any pretext for self-seeking (God is witness to that); we never sought honor from men, from you or from anybody else, though as apostles of Christ we had the power of claiming to be men of weight; no, we behaved gently when we were among you, like a nursing mother cherishing her own children, fain, in our yearning affection for you, to impart not only the gospel of God to you but our very souls as well—you had so won our love. Brothers, you recollect our hard labor and toil, how we worked at our trade night and day, when we preached the gospel to you, so as not to be a burden to any of you. You are witnesses, and so is God, to our behavior among you believers, how pious and upright and blameless it was, how (as you know) we treated each of you as a father treats his children, beseeching you, encouraging you, and charging you to lead a life worthy of the God who called you to his own realm and glory.—Moffatt's Translation.

REVIEW QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

For Young People and Adults. 1. What was the most remarkable thing about the church at Antioch, Syria? 2. What part did Peter and James play in the spread of Christianity? 3. What is religion according to James? 4. Give an account of Paul's First Missionary Journey. 5. How was Paul led to carry the gospel into Europe? 6. Give an account of Paul's Second Missionary Journey as far as Berœa. 7. Where and how has the gospel been proclaimed to Gentiles? 8. What persecutions has Paul endured? 9. What characteristics of Paul have been revealed in these lessons? 10. Give a paraphrase of our lesson taken from Paul's letter to the Philippians.

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. What was the beginning of foreign missions? 2. Tell an incident which reveals Paul's great courage. 3. How was Paul led to enter Europe; where and to whom did he first preach in Europe? 4. Name four of Paul's fellow workers and tell something about each. 5. Under what circumstances was Paul driven from Antioch in Pisidia? 6. Lystra? 7. Philippi? 8. Thessalonica? 9. Berœa? 10. What letters of Paul have we studied? Give one thought from each.

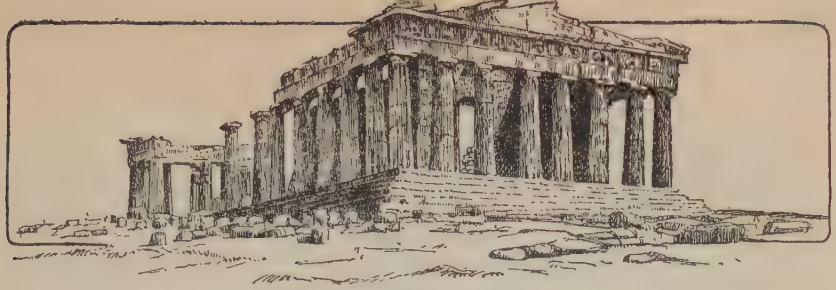
WRITTEN WORK TO BE BROUGHT TO CLASS

1. An Appreciation of Barnabas.
2. An Appreciation of Paul.
3. A Characterization of John Mark.
4. A Letter to the Jerusalem Christian Advocate informing its readers about the new departure in the Church at Antioch.
5. An editorial in the Antioch Journal of Syria expressing regret at the departure of Paul and Barnabas.
6. An interview with the priest of Jupiter at Lystra concerning Paul and Barnabas.
7. A letter to the Congregationalist of Antioch in Syria explaining the difference of opinion that arose between two missionaries and its results.
8. A reporter's account for the Baptist Herald of a visit to a religious gathering at Philippi.
9. The report made to the Society for the Protection of Roman Rights by one of its agents concerning the treatment of Paul in Philippi.
10. An account in the Herald of Thessalonica of a recent riot.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

For Young People and Adults. 1. What could Athens give Paul? 2. What could Athens receive from Paul? 3. How is idolatry a repudiation of the spirituality of God? 4. Why are not the ethnic religions sufficient? 5. Are we worshiping an unknown God whom we might know? 6. Who are harder to win for Christ, educated or uneducated people? Why? 7. What did Epicureans believe? Stoics?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. Where is Athens? 2. For what is it famous? 3. Name some of its noted men. 4. What can we do to help teach idolaters today about the true God? 5. What did Paul say about the character of God? 6. About the brotherhood of man?



THE PARTHENON, ATHENS

FOURTH QUARTER

(Third Quarter of a Nine Months' Course)

LESSON I—OCTOBER 4

PAUL IN ATHENS

GOLDEN TEXT: In him we live, and move, and have our being. Acts. 17.28

LESSON Acts 17.16-34 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 139.7-12

REFERENCE MATERIAL John 4.19-26; 1 Corinthians 15.12-20

ACTS 17.22 And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said,

Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious. 23 For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, To AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you. 24 The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: 28 for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said,

For we are also his offspring.

29 Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. 30 The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: 31 inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again. 33 Thus Paul went out from among them. 34 But certain men clave unto him, and believed: among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. PAUL'S OCCUPATION AT ATHENS, verses 16, 17. While Paul awaited the coming of Silas and Timothy (see The Historical Background), his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols. To the cultured Athenians these idols were only objects of art, but to the ignorant they were gods.

A good criterion of a man's character may be gained from the knowledge of the things which stir his heart.

Paul preached in the synagogue to the Jews and proselytes, and also reasoned in the marketplace every day with them that met him. In this he was like Socrates, who was wont to stop his compatriots and by cross-examination try to arouse in them a desire for better things.

Paul may have been more successful in his work with individuals than in his public preaching. Personal work often wins where preaching fails. This is a ministry which all can exercise.

II. PAUL'S ENCOUNTER WITH EPICUREAN AND STOIC PHILOSOPHERS, verses 18-21. The Epicureans taught that enjoyment was the be-all and end-all of existence for at death a man perished utterly.

How much actual Epicureanism can we find in America today?

The pantheistic Stoics taught that pursuit of virtue should engage man's thoughts, but that everyone, the deity as well as man, was bound by the immutable laws of fixed fate, and that, consequently, the nearer a man approached to supreme indifference toward all the events of life, the better.

How much pantheism is there in America today? In Christian Science?

Some of these philosophers said of Paul, "What would this babbler say?" A babbler talks fluently, but to no purpose. The Greek word translated "babbler" refers to a bird picking up seed for food, chattering away meanwhile, and was a term of extreme contempt, used of one who gathered up scraps of knowledge and passed them off as his own, one with a mere smattering of ideas.

Others of the philosophers said, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods" because he preached Jesus and the resurrection. Seemingly they thought Paul was preaching about two new deities, one of them Jesus, and the other the Resurrection.

And they took hold of Paul and brought him into the Areopagus. The Greek word *Areopagus* means the *Hill of Mars,* but it is probable from the expression in verse 22, "in the midst of the Areopagus," that the word here referred, not to the hill, but to the Athenian Council called the Areopagus because in early days it met on the hill. In Paul's time it met in the marketplace, perhaps near the foot of the hill. This was the highest tribunal in Athens: to it belonged the duty of investigating all new teaching. It was an informal hearing to which Paul was summoned.

"May we know what this new teaching is which is spoken by thee?" the philosophers questioned. "For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean." Whether they spoke courteously or ironically no one can now say.

Parenthetically Luke now observes: "Now all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing." "Literally, 'some newer thing,' something newer than that which had just preceded it as new up to the time of asking." Athens was the university center for the Roman world, and many strangers were attracted to it by its beauty and fame, its philosophy and its leisure. Recall Milton's lines:

Athens, the eye of Greece! mother of arts
And eloquence! Native of famous wits!

III. PAUL'S TEXT—TO AN UNKNOWN GOD, verses 22, 23. Standing up in their midst, Paul addressed them. "Ye men of Athens," he began, using the classical words familiar to us through the writings of Thucydides and Demosthenes, "in all things (wherever I look), I perceive that ye are very religious." The Greek word translated *very religious* may also mean *somewhat superstitious,* as the marginal rendering of the Bible gives it. Paul's words could be taken as a compliment or the reverse. "There is no reason to suppose that Paul's words were an accommodation to the usual practice of Athenian orators of commencing with a mere compliment. At the same time, it is possible that with delicate tact the apostle made use of a word of doubtful meaning, which could not provoke hostility at the outset, while it left unexpressed his own judgment as to the nature of this reverence for the divine." Moreover, Paul was always courteous; he was "a fine old Virginia gentleman," a Southerner claims.

Courtesy is an expression of thoughtfulness for others. It springs from the heart. Out of the fulness of the heart let words and actions speak. Be courteous.

The explanation of his remark Paul next gives: "For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found there in addition to altars with dedications to definite gods one with the inscription, To an Unknown God." A Roman poet, Petronius, said that it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens; and another poet, Pausanius, said there were more images in Athens than in all the rest of Greece combined. "In one street there stood before every house a square pillar, carrying upon it a bust of the god Hermes, whence the street bore the name of the Street of the Hermæ. Another street, the Street of the Tripods, was lined with tripods dedicated by the winners of the Greek national games, and carrying each an inscription to a deity. Every gateway and porch carried an image of its protecting god." According to Pausanius (second century) and Philostratus

PAUL PREACHING AT ATHENS

From a Painting by Raphael

(third century) there were altars to "unknown gods" on the way from Phalerum to Athens, at Athens, and at Olympia. Such altars were erected by men who had experienced some deliverance and were not certain to what deity they owed the favor. The poet Epimenides bade the Athenians cure a plague by erecting altars "to the deity concerned" (the unknown deity who had sent the pestilence) at any spot where a flock of sheep that he had turned loose lay down.

"We live in a world of idolaters today. Not only at home are men placing gold and power and pleasure in the place of God, but a very large proportion of the human race are actually worshiping physical idols of their own creation. We should not be deceived by the pleasing exterior of a modern civilization which at heart is godless; nor should we be misled by the charms of Oriental mysticism when we know that beneath it lies a practical, popular, degrading, universal idolatry" (Dr. C. R. Erdman).

"What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you," Paul announced to the Athenians.

The inscription told Paul that there was in the Athenian heart "the deep, unsatisfied yearning of humanity for a clearer and closer knowledge of the unseen Power which men worshiped dimly and imperfectly. Such a yearning is expressed in the sacred Vedic hymns of an Old World, and in the crude religions of the New."

IV. THE SERMON, THE KNOWN GOD, verses 24-29. Paul then proceeded to show how God, far from being unknown, had revealed himself in many ways. He was the Creator, "the God that made the world and all things therein." The thought of God as Creator was strange to the Athenians, for the Epicureans held that matter was eternal and the world was the result of a chance collision of atoms; while the Stoics were pantheists, who did not regard the Divine Being who made the world as distinct from the world itself. God is a Spirit: "being Lord of Heaven and earth, he dwelleth not in temples made with hands," as did their gods, Paul told them; God is independent: he is not "served by men's hands, as though he needed anything." "The heathen were accustomed to clothe the images of the gods with splendid garments, and to minister to them in various ways."

This truth has been forgotten or neglected by a great host who have honestly been striving to serve God. Men have shut themselves up in cloisters and thought that in this way they were serving him. By service we increase the welfare, the well-being, of others; shall we think in any way to increase the well-being of God? The only way in which we can serve him was told by Jesus in his parable about the Last Judgment: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." We serve God by serving men.

God is the Giver: "He himself giveth to all life and breath, and all things."

A living Christian and a living church will have a constant sense of dependence on God.

Then to those Greeks who called all other men barbarians, Paul did not hesitate to affirm that God is the Unifier and Ruler: "He made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation. Paul said, 'God has made of one'; the authorized Version adds "blood" but the word is lacking in the Greek; Paul was intent upon announcing the fact of the unity, not the character of it.

God is Immanent: "They should see God, if haply (perhaps) they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us."

"Closer is he than breathing
Nearer than hands and feet" (Tennyson).

"I hold more strongly than ever to this conviction, deepened and strengthened by long experience, of the reality, the nearness, and the personality of God" (Gladstone).

"For in him we live, and move, and have our being." This line has been found in a poem written by Epimenides, although, of course, not written of the true God whom Paul proclaimed.

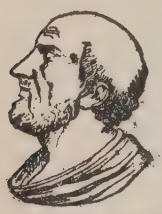
God is the Father: "as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are his offspring." Thus sang Aratus and Cleanthes in their hymn to Zeus. Aratus, like Paul, was a native of Cilicia; he lived in the third century B. C. Cleanthes lived a generation earlier than Aratus.

"Being therefore the offspring of God," Paul logically argues, "we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver or stone, graven by art and device of man." We who have immaterial, immortal souls, are the offspring of God—God himself, therefore cannot be like any material object.

V. THE APPLICATION OF THE SERMON, verses 30, 31. After having paid pleasing tribute to their poets, Paul then proceeded to tell his hearers the great truths in regard to Jesus and the resurrection. "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked (recall Paul's words at Lystra, Acts 14.16); but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent" (turn back from worshiping idols, and worship him).

With knowledge comes responsibility. Since the coming of Christ man cannot plead ignorance of the true God and of what his requirements are.

"Inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness": this Paul dared to affirm, knowing that both Epicureans and Stoics rejected the idea of a future judgment. And the judge will be "the man whom he hath ordained," Jesus the Christ, the One who is the Revealer of God.


The Poet Aratus

"To believe thus in Christ as alive and the world as moving inevitably towards him for judgment is to incur, no doubt, the laughter of the Athenians of today. But it means anchorage. It means the steadying both of faith and of will in the face of temptation. The looking up to the Lord Jesus as Judge means the enveloping of one's life in a saving reverence and awe and worship within which there is yet mysteriously intertwined the benediction of a human friendship" (Dr. S. A. Johnston Ross).

VI. THE EFFECT OF THE SERMON, verses 32-34. Paul followed his reference to Christ as Judge with the remark that God had "given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." At this mention of the resurrection of the dead he was interrupted, and the meeting was broken up. As Paul himself says, "The Greeks seek after philosophy (wisdom); but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto Gentiles foolishness." A discussion arose, some mocked, but others said, "We will hear thee concerning this yet again." But they never did.

"The Athenians left the discourse at the point of moral pressure. As long as Paul played the part of a Jewish Socrates they were willing to hear him. But the moment Paul flamed into moral earnestness, left the intellectual plane and came down to struggle with the heart and question it with hard interrogation, then the Athenians mocked, or with partial civility nodded to him a promise that they might come again tomorrow. We say, We will come again tomorrow. So we may, but Paul may not be there" (Joseph Parker).

The failure was not in the sermon but in the hearers. Take heed how ye hear. A few good hearers there were, notwithstanding: Dionysius the Areopagite (to whom some ruins at the foot of Mars Hill have been dedicated), and a woman named Damaris.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What did Paul say to the people of Lystra about God as Creator? In what earlier lesson have we heard Paul say, in effect, that "The times of ignorance God overlooked?" What fact about Jesus did Paul always incorporate in his sermons?

From Thessalonica to Athens. Three weeks ago we read about Paul's experiences at Thessalonica and Berœa. When hostile Jews from Thessalonica came on to Berœa and stirred up trouble for Paul, Paul was sent by the brethren to the sea and accompanied to Athens. By his Berœan escort he sent back word to Silas and Timothy, who had remained behind, to join him at once.

For the Blackboard. To your record for Lesson XI of Last Quarter, add: Athens.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Journeying to Athens by boat from the Macedonian coast, Paul sailed past Berœa, and must have thought about the Greek's brave defense of the narrow pass of

Thermopylæ, and then later on about their glorious defeat of the Persians on the Plain of Marathon. He must have landed at Piræus, then as now the port of Athens, and then have walked the four miles to Athens. Reaching the city, he passed beautiful marble statues of Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, Apollo, Minerva, and many other gods and goddesses; of Hercules, Theseus and many other mythological heroes; of Demosthenes and many other great orators and statesmen and warriors. Near the center of the city he came to the Agora, or marketplace, an open space around which were grouped public buildings, stoas or porches, and shops. Here it was that he preached to the people.

North of the Agora was the Areopagus, or Mars Hill, a rugged, stony hill surmounted by a temple of Mars, the God of War. Tradition points out a sheltered plateau on the side of the Areopagus hill (whence rock-hewn steps lead up to the hilltop), as the place where Paul stood.

On that hillside one beautiful Sunday afternoon we listened to the reading of Paul's sermon by a member of the International Lesson Committee, and looking up to the summit of the Acropolis, or citadel, of Athens, a steep hill of solid rock three hundred feet high before us, we saw the actual works of man on which Paul had gazed—the magnificent ruins of the Parthenon, the Erechtheum, the little Temple of the Winged Victory — and we wondered not that Paul declared "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands."

The Acropolis, with the Areopagus in the Foreground

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Very familiar to you, no doubt, is the pedagogical dictum that one should proceed from the known to the unknown. Note how Paul followed this law in his address to the Athenians: "What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you." Standing there before the Athenians Paul yearned to tell all he knew about Jesus Christ and his resurrection. How did he begin? He referred to that altar dedicated to the unknown God, and later he referred to the truths with which they were acquainted through the words of their own writers—"as certain of your own poets have said." He took that little bit of truth in which the Athenians believed—that there was an unknown God—and with that as a basis led them on to the thought of the one true, living God, the Creator and Father of all mankind, and of Jesus Christ the Savior and Judge.

"All the history of the progress of men's thought bears witness that when God wants to give men knowledge which they have not had before, he always opens it to them out of something which they have already known," observes Phillips Brooks. "When God wanted to give the world the truth of Christ, he took that Hebrew nation which had some truth, truth of the right sort, though it was very meager and insufficient, and mixed up with other things which were not true; he took that truth and brought Christianity out of that. And so when he wanted to bring his Christianity, his highest truths, into any new region, he has always made it appear as the fulfillment, the completion, of what the people of that region knew already."

This is the law which you must follow in all your teaching. Have you a class of young people or adults whose religious beliefs are poor and weak and barren? Take their bit of knowledge or belief that is true and good, however meager it may be, and build thereon, leading them on to ever larger and truer conceptions of prayer and of faith, of obedience and of service, of God and of Christ.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
TRUE AND FALSE IDEAS OF GOD

Beginning the Lesson. We hear a great deal about the eloquence, the skill, the tact of the sermon that Paul preached on Mars Hill at Athens, of how with exquisite

discrimination he said to those men of Athens just the right thing for them. Phillips Brooks recalls these oft-repeated words of praise and declares that the power of his tact was really love. "He felt for those men, and so he said to them what they personally needed. Never were people on the brink of so many of the highest things, and missed them, as these Athenians. Easy enough it is to cry out 'Hypocrite!' to condemn as hopelessly frivolous and insincere this life which always walked on the brink of earnestness, and yet was never earnest. But possible is it to be impressed as Paul was with reverence and pity that left no room for contempt, reverence for the men who came so near to so much, and pity for the men who missed it so badly."

The Unknown God. The leading families of races in the world's history have at some time received the inspiration of the Unknown God. They or their ancestors have, no doubt, during their earliest periods of development deified natural and lifeless objects, and worshipped sticks and stones as fetish. Then they have adored the great powers or appearances of Nature, such as the storm, and thunder, the light, and above all, the sky, or heaven. Next they have risen to the conception of the Heaven-God, luminous, resplendent, eternal, bringing light and life, yet perhaps only one out of many intelligent powers or deities. At one stage of progress the sun was the great personification of Deity. The magnificent orb was the impersonation of a power, glorious, unspeakable, benevolent, which causes and governs all. This was the Heaven-God, and soon the Day-Father, the Father in heaven. This was the usual and natural development among masses of men. The myth-making fancy attaches itself to these ideas, and changes and remolds them endlessly. And where the imagination was stronger than the reason or the moral faculty, we have the phenomena of polytheism, idolatry, and all its degrading effects, even down to the most cruel and licentious rites of worship.

Worshiping the Unknown God
From a painting in the Congressional Library

But during this development of religion from the lowest stage of animalism, there will always be individuals, and sometimes races, with the capacity for the highest inspiration. Men will arise to whom the intuition of God, as the One all-causing, all-loving, ever-enduring, will come home as the most real thing in the universe—men who at once know its truth, who live for it and die for it, and to whom all other human beliefs are as nothing in the balance. These men are the prophets and inspired leaders of the world.—C. Loring Brace.

Courtesy and Toleration in Mission Fields. A modern missionary, addressing the cultivated classes of China or Japan, has before him "a most religious people," and is called to exercise the same appreciative refinement which "Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman called Damaris, and some others," recognized as they listened to Paul. Frontal attack on racial prejudices, uninformed contempt for alien traditions, an attitude of Western superiority among rites and creeds so ancient as to make Christianity a religious upstart—these have irritated or repelled many an Oriental mind, bred in habits of courtesy, toleration and restraint; and no preliminary study is more fundamental in the training of a Christian missionary than an examination and assimilation of the intelligent sympathy and gracious considerateness which stamp each appeal of Paul with the mark of a Christian gentleman.—Dr. Francis G. Peabody.

The Unknown God in America. America of today is richer and busier than ancient Athens was, more splendid, more luxurious, more immensely, intensely preoccupied with itself. The surface of life has never been so varied, so absorbing, diverting, distracting. New impressions, new discoveries, new facts, come upon us so quickly and thickly that we have hardly time to think or to feel.

And this rush of surface life has for many of us completely crowded God out. Perhaps never in the world before has there been so little sense or thought of the divine in common living. In our education we try to teach a thousand things, things of supposedly ideal profit, things of practical daily usefulness. We are prohibited by law from teaching anything about God. What pagan or barbarous nation would not find such a state of affairs grotesque? God has left the hearth also. Where are family prayers, faithful readings of the Bible? They are gone and forgotten, and few of us know them any more. But we find God in the churches still. Perhaps—when the automobile takes us there and not elsewhere. And even in the church the social tends more and more to override the sacred. We comfort ourselves with the thought that we are treating God with reverence; but often reverence is dangerously near oblivion.

Can anything really take the place of God? Not speed, the perpetual rush of new inventions that hurry us faster and faster—whither? Not money, the crowding emptiness of business, which throngs our souls with endless calculation and emulous struggle, only to leave them dull and unsatisfied. Not luxury, which merely makes ease and comfort and self-indulgence a habit and so in the end indifferent. Not education, which after long years of turbulent effort leaves us at best aware of what we do not know. Not even the splendid self-abandonment of living for others; for how can we give others what we ourselves have not?

And so the divine must come back, and will come back, if the vastly growing world of democracy is to go on growing to perfection. As St. Augustine said long ago in words of profound beauty, "Thou hast made us to turn to thee, and our hearts can find no peace until in thee they are at rest."—The Youth's Companion.

Getting along without God. Is God as the object of worship and the source of good as real to us as he was to our fathers? That we cannot help doubting.

It is apparent that among the multitude of current systems for improving our bodily health, for relaxing the fret and strain of daily life and for gaining inward peace, there are scarcely any that include prayer. It is the human will that the new prophets exalt, or else it is the hypnotic power of self-suggestion that they appeal to. God is not so much denied as ignored. It is not common to hear the sort of militant atheism that Colonel Ingersoll used to pour out. The very earnestness of his unbelief would be considered as extravagant by modern agnostics. They are polite toward those who still believe in God. They avoid offense by shifting their ground. They do not dispute concerning religion; they simply substitute for it groups of psychological formulas, and they manage to carry along with them thousands who bear the name of Christians and who would be shocked if they were accused of irreligion.

Anyone who was brought up among the genuinely religious influences that were common in American homes a generation ago cannot help realizing that a change has come over a great part of our people. Outwardly circumspect and attentive to religious obligations, they show no consciousness of God as an active and controlling power in their lives. For their health and happiness they depend on the cultivation of their own will power rather than on a careful compliance with God's will. When they manifest an interest in humanity it seldom goes beyond the desire to make men and women more comfortable economically. At the thought of prayer or of other definite communion with the Divine Power they are uneasy, as if that were an outgrown attitude of the spirit from which modern psychology had delivered us.

We believe that this is a temporary illusion, inevitable perhaps in an age that is distinguished chiefly for its curiosity in the field of physical science and its ingenuity in the field of mechanical invention. But there is no hope for the health or happiness of the human soul without a definite reliance upon the Divine Power that is at once without ourselves and within ourselves. Whatever the human intellect and the human will can do for the relief of bodily ills, they cannot, unaided, do much for the spiritual sickness that afflicts so large a part of the world.—The Youth's Companion.

Every Religion a Preparation for Christianity. In India a great crowd of many religions and castes was assembled in the open air for a Christian address. The preacher knew that the men were in no mood to tolerate a text from the Bible. He began by quoting from one of their well-known sacred books a common saying, which declared a priest or intermediary necessary for the salvation of every soul. This text he dwelt upon and illustrated from the customs of Hinduism, showing how deeply this truth is imbedded in their practices and lives. He then said, "We Christians have the same truths, in which we believe, but we call the name of our High

Priest, Jesus Christ." Carefully and completely he led his hearers from the Hindu priest to the Savior's Christ, and the interest manifested in the faces of all was intense.

This incident is merely illustrative of the common methods of the missionaries in every land. When rightly understood and interpreted, every religion is a preparation, in greater or less degree, for the preaching of Christianity.—Dr. James L. Barton, in The Missionary and His Critics.

For Discussion. 1. Paul's courtesy. See Chapter XIV of The Character of Jesus, by Dr. C. E. Jefferson.

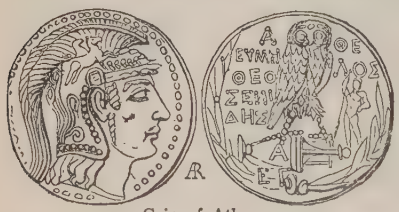
2. Diplomacy and sincerity. "That man throws away his message in order to get a hearing," said a disappointed listener after an address characterized by every effort to win popular applause. Paul never surrendered to this temptation. He was diplomatic in his approach, but he was uncompromisingly faithful when it came to giving his message.—Dr. Lynn H. Hough.

3. There are modern cities—Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles—which may be said to compete with ancient Athens as being hospitable to new religions.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why did Paul choose the large cities for his work? 2. Why did Paul have an attack of low spirits in Corinth? 3. What episode in the life of Elijah does the last clause of verse ten recall? 4. In what respects was Gallio praiseworthy?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
GOD THE FATHER OF ALL MANKIND

Beginning the Lesson. Paul has now reached the most famous of all the cities of Greece. What famous battlefield lies not far from Athens? What famous games took place not far away? What famous buildings were erected in the city, and what remarkable ruins are now to be seen there? What great sculptors had Athens? What great writers and orators and philosophers? Who was the philosopher who went about with a lantern looking for an honest man?



Coin of Athens

According to Luke, the Athenians were always looking for something. He throws in the remark parenthetically in the verses that precede our printed text—what is it?

"Now the Athenians and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing," says Luke. A recent visitor to Athens refers to the way in which Greeks crowd the tables in the cafés of Athens, "sipping and talking, talking, talking, talking," and adds that the chief interest of the people of Athens seems to be talk. They apparently believe that they have wrought a deed when they have merely uttered words. In this they have not changed since Paul's time.

Paul came to Athens with his great message of the Crucified and Risen Savior, and the Athenians said, "Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears." What did others say? Where did they bring Paul to proclaim his message?

Groping after God.

"Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who have faith in God and Nature,
Who believe, that in all ages
Every human heart is human,—
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,
For the good they comprehend not,—
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened:—
Listen!"

You all recognize these words from Longfellow's Hiawatha. Paul expressed the same thought in his address to the Athenians. In what altar did he see them groping after God? In what words did he declare that men should seek after God?

In one of our great Expositions there was a beautiful statue of a girl around which a crowd was always gathered. The girl stood with one hand to her ear, and her face was thoughtful, wistful and wondering. This is the story. Long years ago, when there were wars between the white settlers and the Indians in our country, a little white child was stolen away from her home by the Indians. Her frantic mother went everywhere in search, but all in vain. Years passed, and word came to the mother that a beautiful white girl was growing up in a distant tribe of Indians. The mother started on the long journey and found the girl, whom she was convinced was her own daughter. But how could she make the girl know this? She tried in many ways, and then as a last hope she sat down and crooned over songs which she had sung to her when she had rocked her to sleep. The girl listened intently, wistfully, and then suddenly old memories came back to her and she rushed into her mother's arms.

"I think that something like that has happened all down the ages," once declared a minister after repeating this story, "and that God has called to all his lost children, yearning that they should return to him, whilst they were groping after him if haply they might find him."

Bishop Whipple, when Bishop of Minnesota, related a pathetic instance of the striving of a Red Man to find God. "One day," he said, "an Indian stood at my door, and as I opened it, he knelt at my feet. Of course, I bade him not to kneel. He said: 'My father, I only knelt because my heart is warm to a man that pitied the Red Man. I am a wild man. My home is five hundred miles from here. I knew that all the Indians east of the Mississippi had perished, and I never looked into the faces of my children that my heart was not sad. My father had told me of the Great Spirit, and I have often gone out into the woods and tried to talk to him.' Then he said so sadly, as he looked into my face: 'You don't know what I mean. You never stood in the dark, and reached out your hand, and could not take hold of anything, and I heard one day that you had brought to the Red Man a wonderful story of the Son of the Great Spirit.' That man sat as a child, and he heard the story of the love of Jesus. And when we met again, he looked in my face, and he said, as he laid his hand on his heart, 'It is not dark; it laughs all the while.' "

One Family. "God made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" is a very broad declaration of the brotherhood of all mankind. The Athenians to whom Paul spoke these words divided the world into Greeks and barbarians, and for the barbarians they had only contempt. The nation to which Paul belonged divided the world into Jews and Gentiles, and how great was the Jewish prejudice of the Gentiles you well know. Paul believed in the unity of the human race; all were sons of one Father, and brothers of one another.

Guapung's Prayer. One time as the boat in which the great missionary, Adoniram Judson, was traveling, stopped at a landing place, he noticed a woman standing there. He could tarry but a few moments, but he offered her his hand and spoke to her kindly. Then he reëntered the boat and continued his journey.

This woman was a princess and her name was Guapung.

"I have seen one of the Sons of God," she reported, "I will never worship our gods again. I have served them ever since I was a child, but they have never prevented my husband from beating me. This man spoke to me kindly, and gave me his hand. His God must be the God." That night she offered this prayer to the unknown God of the white stranger: "Lord God, in the heavens, in the earth, in the mountains, in the seas, in the north, in the south, in the east, in the west, pity me, I pray. Show me thy glory, that I may know thee who thou art." For five years she offered this same prayer, and then a missionary came, through whom she heard the gospel preached. At once she became a Christian and devoted her life to winning others for Christ.

Sentence Sermon to Remember.

Lord of all being, throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun to star;
Center and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near.—Holmes.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where was Corinth? 2. What great games were celebrated near by? 3. What two new friends did Paul make in Corinth? 4. Is it more honorable to preach than to make tents? 5. How does Neh. 5.13 throw light upon the symbolic act of verse 6?

LESSON II—OCTOBER 11

PAUL IN CORINTH

GOLDEN TEXT: Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace. Acts 18.9

LESSON Acts 18.1-17 DEVOTIONAL READING 1 Corinthians 13.1-7

REFERENCE MATERIAL 1 Corinthians 2.1-5; 3.10-13; 2 Corinthians 3.1-6

ACTS 18 After these things he departed from Athens and came to Corinth. 2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them; 3 and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tentmakers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks.

5 But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. 6 And when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook out his raiment and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 7 And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Titus Justus, one that worshiped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. 9 And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: 10 for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city. 11 And he dwelt *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. PAUL SUPPORTS HIMSELF AT CORINTH BY THE LABOR OF HIS HANDS, verses 1-3. In 61 B. C., Pompey brought Jewish prisoners to Rome, and the settlement grew rapidly. Tiberius deported four thousand Roman Jews to Sardinia "in the hope that the malaria might kill them." Claudius came to the throne in 41 A. D. He was indebted to Herod Agrippa of Jerusalem for help in gaining the throne, and on that account he granted favors to the Roman Jews. But when the Jewish zealots of Judea revolted against the Roman yoke it was not deemed safe to permit their kindred to remain in the imperial city, and Claudius issued an edict ordering all Jews to leave Rome. Suetonius, in his life of the Emperor Claudius, gives another reason for the edict: it was "because they were in a state of continual tumult at the instigation of our Chrestus." It is thought that the Romans, hearing the name *Chrestus, Christos* (Christ) so often, supposed him to be one of the leaders of the Roman Jews. "Suetonius no doubt means that the dissensions between the Jews and Christians had already risen to such a height as to attract public attention, and appear to threaten the public peace. Yet when the Jews were expelled from Rome scarcely twenty years had elapsed since the death of Christ. Paul did not arrive in Rome till ten years after this date. No other apostle had been there. The good seed had sprung up of itself. The great Roman church was founded we know not how. But for the casual phrase of a heathen historian, we should not have known that it was a strong, zealous church in the days of Emperor Claudius."

Our interest in this event of the expulsion of the Jews from Rome lies in the fact that two of them, a Jew named Aquila and his wife Priscilla, settled in Corinth, and when Paul arrived in Corinth from Athens, he took up his abode with them because he was of the same trade as they. Together they wrought at their tentmaking. The rabbinical law required every Jewish father, no matter how rich he might be, to teach his son some manual trade. "He that teaches not his son a trade, does the same as if he taught him to be a thief," said Rabbi Judah. Paul was a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, and he learned the local industry, that of weaving goats' hair into cloth and making the cloth into tents. We are told of his supporting himself by his trade at Thessalonica (1 Thess. 2.9; 2 Thess. 3.8) and at Ephesus (Acts 20.34), as well as at Corinth. See the reasons he gives in Acts 20.34, 35; 1 Thess. 2.9. "My business is preaching the gospel," said Carey, "I cobble shoes to pay expenses."

"No higher example can be found of the possibility of combining diligent labor in the common things of life with the utmost spirituality of mind."

II. PAUL'S PREACHING, verses 4, 5. Every Sabbath Paul preached in the synagogue and sought to persuade Jews and Greeks to accept his message. When Silas and Timothy joined him (recall Acts. 17.14-16 and 1 Thess. 3.1, 2, 6), Paul

yielded to the urge within him, and preached that Jesus was the Christ more zealously. Another reason for Paul's giving more of his time to preaching now was that Silas and Timothy brought money with them (2 Cor. 11.9; Phil. 4.15), and there was less need for his working with his hands.

"In Corinth, art, architecture, abundance of money, intellectual and physical culture, had done their best, and had failed to ennoble humanity. Paul preached, Cleanse first the heart, get the man right, let him believe in and rely upon his Savior, and all else will follow. How long is it going to take to have us put our trust in and apply these great truths and principles to modern municipal evil conditions?"

III. HIS MESSAGE REJECTED BY THE JEWS, verse 6. The Jews "opposed themselves" and blasphemed. The Greek words translated "opposed themselves" means literally "set themselves in battle array."

It is not uncommon in these days to find people like them in that, as Matthew Henry says of them, "they could not argue against it, but what was wanting in reason they made up in ill language."

Then Paul shook out his raiment. By this gesture he indicated that the fault lay with them, he would have nothing more to do with them. Recall a similar symbolic act at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13.51), and compare Neh. 5.13. "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean," he cried, thus solemnly asserting that he was not responsible for their fate. They had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, as he had told the Jews at Pisidian Antioch. Recall Pilate's words at the trial of Jesus, Mt. 27.24, 25; "From henceforth—here in Corinth—I will go unto the Gentiles," he added.

IV. HIS MESSAGE RECEIVED BY THE GENTILES, verses 7, 8. Paul left the synagogue of the Jews, and went to the house of Titus Justus, a Gentile proselyte who lived near the synagogue. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue and his household, and many of the Corinthians believed Paul's message and were baptized.

"I will look upon all lands as belonging to me and my land as belonging to all. I will so live as if I knew that I am born for others. I will know that the world is my country. Wherever a man is, there is room for doing good" (Seneca, Paul's contemporary).

V. PAUL'S CHEERING VISION OF THE NIGHT, verses 9-11. Even Paul the Dauntless had his time of depression, but in a vision he was reassured. "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee and no man shall set on thee to harm thee," were the words of God that came to him.

"If you believe in God, where is there any room for terror? If you are sure that God, in the long run, means kindness to you, you should be happy" (Robert Louis Stevenson).

"For I have much people in this city": this encouragement also came to Paul. He was anxious about the steadfastness of the converts in Macedonia, as his letter to the Thessalonians shows; he had missed at first the sympathy and assistance of Silas and Timothy, his work at Athens had been productive of little result; the city of Corinth was renowned for its wickedness; and his bodly strength was depleted. Evidently his mission seemed to him a failure, just as Elijah's had to Elijah, and like that Old Testament prophet, Paul learned that there were many who were not bowing the knee to idols.

"It is easy to read a whole city down to the level of the audacious vices which characterize some of its citizens, but just when Corinth, or Rome, or London, or Chicago, is seen in the lurid light of its vices, the conviction is borne in upon the man who really sees deeply and understands, that God has much people in these cities. They are God's towns, after all" (Dr. Lynn H. Hough).

Paul continued his preaching in Corinth for a year and a half. During this time he wrote his two letters to the Thessalonians, the first products from his pen which we possess.

VI. PAUL BEFORE GALLIO, verses 12-17. The opposition of the Jews increased until they rose *en masse* and hurried Paul before Gallio, the newly arrived proconsul of Achaia. This Gallio was a brother of Seneca, Nero's tutor, whose writings on morals have come down to us. Of Gallio Seneca said: "You can hardly think that a man could look with such gentleness upon any single soul as my brother

Gallio can look upon all mankind." The Jews hoped through Gallio to obtain the conviction and punishment of Paul, and they accused Paul of proclaiming an unlawful worship. Gallio refused to consider the matter. "If it were a matter of wrong or of wicked villiany," he would have heard the case, but he was "not minded to be a judge" of questions pertaining to their own law.

Gallio seems to have been such a magistrate as the world always stands in need of—conscientious, just, strong in his sense of duty, careful in investigating charges and quick in arriving at the heart of them, who declined to swerve from the path of duty at the clamor of a mob, and acted without fear or favor.

When the Greeks turned against the Jews and beat Sosthenes, the successor to the convert Crispus in the presidency of the synagogue, and perhaps the chief accuser of Paul, Gallio, indifferent to all Jewish strife, took no notice of it.

"So began at Corinth the dreadful talk of Hebrew persecution, of torture, of massacre, of pogroms, which continue to this day. Why the Jew should be excluded from many clubs, confined in ghettos and often suspected or disbelieved, is a question only to be answered by asking another—why the Jew on his side persists in those qualities which somehow challenge men" (P. Whitwell Wilson).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What was the result of Paul's preaching in Athens? In what mood must he have been when he left that city? What did Paul say in his letter to the Thessalonians about his supporting himself by his own labor? Why did he there refer to this fact? In what city had Paul said: "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken unto you. Seeing you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles"?

Paul at Corinth. The result of Paul's preaching at Athens had been small—only a few believed. It had been a seeming failure, and Paul went on to Corinth "in fear and in much trembling" (1 Cor. 2.3). Our lesson tells us how his discouragement was overcome.

Paul spent eighteen months at Corinth—a longer time than in any other city except Ephesus—but Luke's account of his work there comprises only eighteen verses.

The Close of Paul's Second Missionary Journey. The time came for Paul to bid his Corinthian converts good-bye; we may well understand that he urged them to remain steadfast in their faith, commended them to God's care, and promised them letters and a speedy return. Then with Aquila and Priscilla he set sail from the harbor of Cenchreæ and crossed the Ægean Sea to Ephesus. There he left his two companions, but did not yield to the entreaties of the Jews in whose synagogue he preached that he himself tarry longer, for he was desirous of spending the coming Passover with the Christian community at Jerusalem. Promising to come again if God so willed, he sailed to Cæsarea, and then journeyed on to Jerusalem. Here he celebrated the Passover, reported the results of his missionary labors and returned, by way of Cæsarea, no doubt, to Antioch in Syria, which he had left four years earlier on his second missionary journey.

For the Blackboard. Add to your list of places visited on the Second Missionary Journey: Corinth, Ephesus, Cæsarea, Jerusalem, Antioch in Syria.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Turn to your map and study the country of Greece. Notice the narrow isthmus which connects the Peloponnesus with the mainland, separating the Saronic Gulf (of the Ægean Sea) from the Gulf of Corinth (of the Adriatic). Then notice the location of Corinth, dominating the Isthmus; "The City of the Two Seas," it was poetically called. It is about fifty miles from Athens to Corinth. There was no canal across the Isthmus in Paul's day, though Julius Cæsar, Hadrian, and Caligula had all considered the project, and Nero, at the very time of our lesson, had begun the undertaking, though he soon gave it up. Boats were dragged the four miles across the Isthmus to avoid the stormy passage around the peninsula.

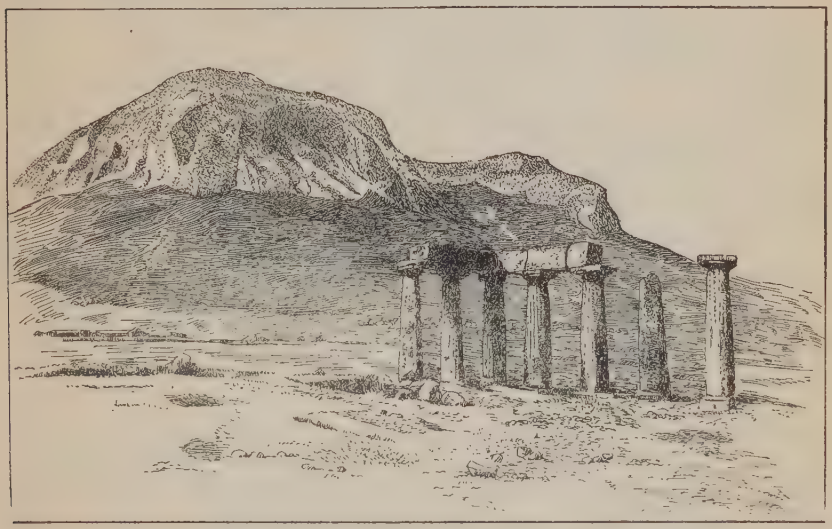
Corinth was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia (Greece), and its location made it the chief commercial city as well. It was a beautiful city, the glory of Greece in Paul's day. Towering over the plain was the great rock of Acrocorinthus,

the citadel of Corinth, whence one has one of the most superb views in the world. Famous in legend and song, in wealth and commerce, in luxury and vice, was this city of four hundred thousand inhabitants. Only a few beautiful columns of a Greek temple which must have been magnificent in Paul's day, have long marked the site of the ancient city. In 1896 The American School of Archæology began excavation, and now we can walk upon a marble-paved street (with the ruins of sixteen shops on one side) over which Paul must have walked, and can stand beside the ruins of the fountain which was then beautifully adorned.

Pontus, whence Aquila came, was a Roman province of Asia Minor bordering the Black Sea. Recall Acts 2.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

There is a discouraged note in our lesson. When Paul first came to Corinth he preached only on the Sabbath. The vision that came to him implies that he was in need of special divine encouragement.



Ruins of a Temple on the Site of Corinth

"I should think you would have been utterly discouraged," remarked a friend who had been listening to a missionary's account of her first days in the foreign village where she had gone to labor. "Oh, but you know I was not there to be discouraged," was her wise answer. Paul had not gone on his missionary tour to be discouraged, and when Silas and Timothy came, he was again "constrained," wholly engrossed in his work.

Moments of intense discouragement come to every teacher. His work is not showing the result for which he had hoped; and his strength is not always up to the mark. But he is not there as a teacher to be discouraged, and he may have the same enheartening which Paul had in his vision.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
PAUL PLANTS THE CHURCH IN CORINTH

Beginning the Lesson. To use Paul's own words, he began his work in Corinth in "weakness and fear and great trembling." All the snap had been taken out of him in the preceding weeks. Ever since his arrival in Europe, his life had been harassed and jeopardized at every step.

When his spirits were at low tide, the Lord said to him in a vision at night, "Don't be afraid, Paul. Go right on speaking, no one is going to hurt you." We read Paul's condition in the words which were spoken to him. His courage was oozing out. "Don't be afraid," said the Lord. He was wondering whether it were worth

while to go on. "Go on!" said the Lord. He was afraid that the Jews were going to trap and kill him. "Nobody is going to hurt you," said the Lord. In that night Paul became convinced that his fears were groundless, and that there was still work in Corinth for him to do.

It was necessary that Paul be rescued again and again. Like the rest of us, he was repeatedly meeting situations which were too much for his strength. He was not the imperturbable demigod whom the pious imagination loves to picture. His spiritual weakness brings him nearer to us. The Paul who serenely discourses on "Predestination" and "Foreordination" is like a God seated on a philosophic Olympus. We cannot come where he is. But the Paul who is so badly frightened that he is in a tremble, who becomes emotionally so upset that he cannot get his mind on his work, who sometimes feels so blue that he cannot even preach the gospel, who falls into sloughs of despond and flounders there until God pulls him out, is a man whose pulse beat helps us because we feel sure that he is our brother. The world will forever need the encouragement of a man who felt the agony of fear and overcame it, who fell into the pit of despondency and climbed out again, who was defeated and became discouraged but pressed steadily on.—Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, in The Character of Paul.

How Paul Conquered his Mood. He had been cast out of four cities one after the other, and now Corinth seemed likely to treat him in the same way. The Corinthians were looking down on him with a supercilious smile. His heart was weighted down with anxiety and gloom. He had an impulse to change his course or give up altogether, but the impulse was seized by the throat and throttled. He made up his mind to go right on as he had been going, proclaiming Jesus as the promised Messiah. He deepened his determination to continue to emphasize the things which awakened resentment in the Jew and contempt in the Greek—the suffering of Jesus and his ignominious death.

Men of flabby fiber can be cowed by criticism and chilled by opposition. Men of strength do not flinch or run. Paul was sensitive to criticism, and he craved the good opinion of men, but he made up his mind not to change his style in deference to the taste of his Corinthian congregation. He would not rely on the charm of chiseled and polished speech, even though it brought him commendation. He would continue to speak simply and clearly the things which he felt God wanted him to say. He listened with disdain to the comments of his superficial critics, and went triumphantly on his way.—Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

Paul Preached that Jesus is the Christ. Do you believe that a message like that will really appeal to the sin and sorrow of London or Corinth or Chicago or any other place? David Livingstone tells us in his diary how when he was traveling in South Africa with savages, foul as savages are, and he alone, a white man, sick and in danger among them, he loved to preach to them about the passion of the great Mediator.

Fancy speaking to people like that about the sufferings of Jesus Christ! He goes on, "It warms my own heart." That told. Those men realized the great man; savages as they were, they realized that, and the message was part of what they realized. Do you and I believe that people will respond? Shall we give ourselves to know Jesus Christ, to think oftener about him? May I urge you to think of Paul in Corinth, of Livingstone in South Africa, and to recall oftener for yourselves and for those about you the life of the great Mediator, Jesus Christ and him crucified? —Dr. T. R. Glover.

Thank God for the Church at Corinth. If the church gained a foothold in that Paris of the ancient world, there is no city of the modern world in which it may not hope to succeed. To carve out of Corinthian vice and darkness such a sphere of light as this Christian church was nothing short of a miracle. The temptation must often have come to the apostle to feel that the gospel had no message for the Corinthians. It is even so today as we confront the wickedness and indifference of the cities, both in the old world and the new. Who is sufficient for these things?

There is but one way of victory now, as there was then—the preaching of the gospel simply, strongly and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

To this day when we read in the first chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians Paul's wonderful appeal for a united and devoted church, or his fervent appeal for personal purity in the fifth chapter, or his essay on liberty in the eighth chapter, or his beautiful account of the Lord's Supper in the eleventh chapter, or his praise of love in the thirteenth chapter, or his transcendent shout of victory through the Lord's resurrection in the fifteenth chapter, we are moved to thank God for the

church of Corinth, that drew forth from the apostle such expressions of the power and glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ.—Condensed from an Article in the Westminster Teacher by Dr. Edgar W. Work.

For Discussion. 1. Paul's weakness. The bravery which leaders display under the public eye is often paid for when nervously exhausted by depression in private. See Chapter VII of Dr. Jefferson's The Character of Paul.

2. Good ministers are often too much troubled by adverse criticism, and congregations are often too critical of good ministers.

3. "If the city is the hardest problem which is presented to the church, it is also the church's supreme opportunity."

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What led Paul to write his "Hymn of Love"? 2. Why does the Revised Version use the word *love* where the Authorized Version has *charity?* 3. What is meant by "the tongues of men and of angels"? 4. What is the meaning of the last clause of verse 1? 5. Of "faith, so as to remove mountains"? 6. Is a deed of charity always creditable to the doer? 7. Mention instances in the life of Christ which each statement in verses 4-7 recalls. 8. Explain the figure of speech in verse 12.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
PAUL'S EXPERIENCES IN CORINTH

Beginning the Lesson. A young man came to visit the monk Macarius and found him weaving a mat. "What!" exclaimed the youth, "do you work for food that perishes?" The monk did not answer him but handed him a book and bade him read. Noon came, and instead of being invited as a guest to eat the young man was told that in the cloister the apostolic rule held good—"If any will not work, neither let him eat."

That was the rule which the apostle Paul wrote from Corinth to the church at Thessalonica. What work was he himself doing in Corinth at that time? The same hand that wrote so many of the New Testament Epistles was filled with goats' hair which he was weaving into a coarse cloth for tents. Who were his companions in the work?

The Dignity of Work. The negroes of East Africa are wont to say that "The white man works, the black man does not; the white man is a common man, the black man is a gentleman." The ancient Greeks and Romans had slaves to do their work, and deemed manual labor beneath the dignity of a free-born citizen. "Manual labor is dishonorable," Cicero declared.

Wholly different was the belief and practice of the Jews and early Christians. Jesus Christ himself sanctified toil. His early years were spent in a carpenter's home, and no doubt he himself labored at this trade. Both by his example and by his teaching he enjoined a life of labor—physical or mental—upon his followers. Jesus never lived a day in idleness himself. Recall one of those days recorded in the Gospels: how after a night of toil on the Lake he ceaselessly healed the sick, delivered the possessed, preached to the multitudes, and taught his disciples. During all his public ministry, he identified himself with those who toiled. Beautifully has Dr. Henry van Dyke expressed this:

> They who tread the path of labor, follow where my feet have trod,
> They who work without complaining, do the holy will of God,
> Where the weary toil together, there am I among my own,
> Where the tired workman sleepeth, there am I with him alone.
> This is the Gospel of Labor—sing it, ye bells of the Kirk,
> The Lord of Love came down from above to live with the men who work.

The apostle Paul was one of the world's greatest workers—whether at work with his hands, laboring at his trade of a tentmaker, or in the work of the ministry, preaching or writing letters to his churches, he was never idle. "Study to work with your hands even as we charged you," and "If any will not work, neither let him eat," was his advice to the Thessalonians in his letter written from Corinth.

A Shoemaker who Became a Missionary. There once lived not very far from London a shoemaker. He was fifteen years old when our Declaration of Independence was signed. I presume he had already begun to use the awl and drive pegs. Just a shoemaker—and somehow the world has never expected great things of shoemakers. But this young man was not an ordinary shoemaker. There was one book he especially loved. It was the story of Captain Cook's voyage around the world.

It made him put a map of the world upon the wall of the shop, and day after day as he cobbled away, between pegs he looked up at that map, and wondered about the people who lived in those lands beyond the sea which Captain Cook had visited for the first time.

Not simply did he wonder about them. He grew tremendously interested in them. Captain Cook and his men had found the people of those far-away lands to be heathen—savages, many of them; cannibals, some of them. This shoemaker thought about Jesus's command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. Why had it not been done? Nobody seemed to care about them except this cobbler in England. But when he was eighteen years old, he began to feel that he ought to do something to answer his own prayer.

He knew he had to study before he could do anything. So he bought a Latin grammar and began to teach himself Latin. That was about the first thing people began to study in those days when they wanted to become scholars. When he had mastered Latin, he went on and learned Greek, Hebrew, French and Dutch. He became a minister, and settled as pastor over a little church. But the people were too poor to pay him enough to live on. He taught school and cobbled shoes for a living.

Always, to his own people, to his brother ministers, he talked about sending the gospel to the heathen. He wrote a book on that subject. He preached sermons. He pleaded with tears in his eyes. But nobody would hear him. They laughed at him, and thought his plan absurd.

At last he succeeded in persuading a few friends that it could be done and ought to be done. In 1792, just three hundred years after Columbus discovered America, at the village of Ketering, in England, a missionary society was formed, the first Baptist Foregin Missionary Society; sixty-five dollars and fifty cents was raised, and with that little sum, the work of carrying the gospel to the heathen was begun in dead earnest. And the praying shoemaker, William Carey, was sent out as the first missionary.

He went next year to India, and settled near Calcutta. He had to toil for his own support, and he suffered terrible hardships. But all the while he was mastering the languages of India—Bengali, Sanskrit, the ancient language of India, and a dozen or more languages besides. He translated the Bible into several of them. He became one of the greatest language scholars that ever lived, a professor of languages in a collgee at Calcutta.

But Carey did more than become a missionary himself. His example inspired others, until hundreds had followed in his steps, and the great foreign missionary work was begun. Men call him "The Father of Modern Missions." That isn't quite true, but he did start a wonderful movement. You boys and girls are going to live to see that cause change the whole world.—Dr. William H. Walker, in Five Minutes with the Boys' and Girls' Congregation.

Other Experiences of Paul at Corinth. It is said to be a rule in the Franciscan Order that when a Brother has preached an unusually eloquent sermon he shall be set the next morning to paring the potatoes for breakfast! There was no danger of Paul's becoming too full of pride over his eloquent sermons; he had too many discouragements throughout his ministry. The danger was that he become disheartened. We have an instance here at Corinth of the way in which he needed encouragement. What had happened to discourage him? How was he encouraged? (See the preceding Topic.)

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

No man is born into the world whose work
Is not born with him; there is always work
And tools to work withal, for those who will;
And blessed are the horny hands of toil.—Lowell.

Fear God and work hard.—Livingstone.

Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.—Roosevelt.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What did Jesus say were the two great commandments? (Mt. 12.28-33.) 2. What does John say in 1 Jn. 4.8? 3. How did Jesus say God expressed his great love for the world? (Jn. 3.16.) 4. Why does Paul say "If *I* speak" rather than "If *you* speak"? 5. How will love manifest itself? 6. What will love not do? 7. Commit the lesson to memory.

PAUL WRITES TO THE CORINTHIANS

GOLDEN TEXT: Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13.13

LESSON 1 Corinthians 12.1 to 13.13 DEVOTIONAL READING 1 John 4.7-13

REFERENCE MATERIAL 1 Corinthians 1.1 to 2.5; 1 John 2.10, 11; 4.16-20

1 CORINTHIANS 13 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And if I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. 4 Love suffereth long, *and* is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; 6 rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; 7 beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8 Love never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall be done away; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall be done away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; 10 but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known. 13 But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE ESSENTIALNESS OF LOVE, verses 1-3. Emotional gifts are valueless without love. Eloquence uninspired by love means no more than so much noise, declares Paul in his words, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal." Paul's love for his readers leads him to speak of the possibility of his being without love rather than to accuse them of this lack—thus he illustrates the lesson he wishes to teach. The Greek word translated "tongues" means primarily "ecstatic utterances." "The gift of tongues was an ecstasy of feeling by which men were carried away and broke into rapturous, inarticulate utterances. A modern musician has written songs without words: this is a very apt description of the peculiar kind of spiritual emotion called in the New Testament 'speaking with tongues.' Probably the nearest approach to it most Christians make is when they are carried away by the feeling of a revival meeting. In Mr. Moody's revival meetings the church was full of men who floated, so to speak, on a wave of emotion; an unutterable joy in the redeeming love of God seemed to sustain their life; it was full, as they would have said in the early days, of people speaking with tongues" (James Denney).

Love is more correctly used throughout the Revised Version than the word *Charity* in the Authorized Version. Charity was a good translation of the Greek word *agape* when the Authorized Version was made, but it is now used only to express liberality toward those in need, or liberalness in judging others.

By "sounding brass" is meant a trumpet or instrument made of brass. Trumpets and cymbals were used to produce deafening noises in the worship of pagan temples. The illustration was probably adopted from the shrill, discordant noise made by the speakers with their tongues, each endeavoring to drown the voices of all the others, as seems from what follows to have been the case with the Corinthians, 14.23.

"It is not the steam which is blown off with a loud noise, and is visible for a moment in dense, white clouds, which drives the engine; it is the steam in the boiler, which is subject to intense pressure, and is neither heard nor seen" (Dr. James Denney).

Intellectual gifts are valueless without love. A man may have prophecy, mysteries, knowledge, faith—all these, but if love is lacking he is nothing. Note the contrast between what a man has and what he is: he may *have* extraordinary gifts, but he *is* nothing.

"There are always those to whom Christianity is pre-eminently a kind of knowledge, a system of truth, or rather of truths. It means the truth of the Bible, of the creed, of some outline of Christian ideas on which they have been brought up. They have a zeal for this, and they are moved by what calls it in question as they are for nothing else. It does not perhaps seem

to them that this is the type of intellectualism which is most likely to be loveless" (Dr. James Denney).

Faith "so as to remove mountains" was a proverbial expression for "to accomplish great things." Many of the rabbis were termed "rooters up of mountains" because they were dexterous in removing difficulties, solving cases of conscience, etc. In this sense our Lord's words in Mt. 21.21 are to be understood. He that hath faith will get through any difficulty and perplexity; mountains will become molehills or plains before him" (Dr. Adam Clarke).

Practical gifts are valueless without love. Great sacrifice for the poor, even martyrdom, the supreme act of self-sacrifice (whose motive may be self-glorification only), if not inspired by love for Christ and his cause, has no value in God's sight. Others may benefit from loveless gifts, but not the giver himself.

"Two men give a thousand dollars each to a fund. The treasurer brackets them together as equal givers, with the clumsy instruments which are all that men have for measuring two donors. They are doing the same thing, but one man does nothing. The other does something which will endure through all eternity. The one man gives because of a sense of what is due from him, or because he desires the respect or fears the reproach of others, or because he is very keen about acquiring merit with God. He is nothing. The other has simply one desire, to forget himself for the sake of others, and to use what he has to increase the glory of God and for the service of his brother. But he has done a deed which will shine as a star in the eternal firmament. The difference is in the motive" (The Christian Century).

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE, verses 4-7. In verses 4, 6, 7, Paul tells us what love does; in verses 4, 5, 6, what love does not do. "A great theologian has defined Christian love as the identification of ourselves with God's interest in others. To do this, to seek that God's will for them may be fulfilled, that that which is dear to him in them may be saved, to put what we are and have unselfishly at their service for this end: this is love. We do not know what love is till we see it in Jesus, and when we see it there we see him identifying himself with God's interest in us. We love, because he first loved us. Let us not fail to note in Paul's description of love what another has well called "St. Paul's picture of Christ."

Love suffereth long and is kind: compare Prov. 10.12; 17.9.

"'Tis something, when the day draws to its close,
To say, 'Tho' I have borne a burdened mind,
Have tasted neither pleasure nor repose,
Yet this remains—to all men, friends or foes,
I have been kind" (Dr. W. J. Dawson).

Love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. "The reverse of love is egotism. The egotist cannot love" (Mary Chalmondeley). Recall Tennyson's words:

"Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight."

Love doth not behave unseemly, rudely, discourteously. "Courtesy is love in little things." Seeketh not its own (advantage); is not provoked, taketh not account of evil.

Love deos not write upon a mental ledger the insults and injuries it receives. "Love taketh not account of evil—much less repeats it."

Love rejoiceth not in unrighteousness. "Love is never glad when others go wrong," is Moffatt's translation. There are self-righteous people, like the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like the publican, who take pleasure in considering the faults of others.

This is the eighth negative statement. How much a life of love consists in not doing things!

Love rejoiceth with the truth. Love rejoices to see truth and right prevail. In Moffatt's translation: "Love is gladdened by goodness."

"Who is glad when others sin? A very little honest dealing with our own hearts will show a danger. Have we ever reflected why evil news flies more swiftly than good? When we hear some scandal we pass it on with some such preamble as this: 'You will be sorry to hear about So-and-so'; and we are sorry, no doubt, but not altogether. It gives us some satisfaction to spread it. It is news; the fact that some one has done well is not so exciting;

it falls flat; it is not news. There can be little doubt that human nature takes a certain pleasure in hearing that others go wrong. A statesman is under a cloud; do we not feel a certain pleasure in all this, and if the man is completely cleared are we not a little disappointed, especially if he happens to be a member of another party? If, however, we were Christian after the manner of the teaching given here we should take no joy in such a scandal; we should refuse to believe it until it were proved up to the hilt; if it were disproved we should exult, and all the more if the accused were not with us" (Edward Shillito).

Love beareth all things . . . endureth all things. The Greek word translated *endureth* means primarily to hold fast like a water-tight vessel, to let nothing escape: love does not let others know what it has to endure.

"Can thy love bear life's little frictions? Can it bear the frettings of the world's prose? Can it bear to be itself misunderstood, misinterpreted? Can it endure a delay in the response; can it support those moments of silence where there is no return? If thy love can bear that and not die, it is worthy of Paul's hymn" (George Matheson).

Love believeth all things, hopeth all things. Love believes in the one loved, and when such faith is no longer possible, hopes. Professor Ramsay, calling attention to the rich vocabulary which Paul employs and to his great carefulness in regard to delicate shades of significance in this series of words of verses 4-7, observes that only a person who is accustomed to think much and to philosophize can practise such refinement in language.

III. THE IMPERISHABLENESS OF LOVE, verse 8-13. Paul now returns to the comparison of love with the special gifts of tongues, prophecies, knowledge, and affirms that the latter are temporary gifts, while love is eternal.

"The argument of verses 8-13 involves the important truth that the continuity of human character is not broken either by death or judgment, any more than it is now broken by change of circumstances. Knowledge refers, not to the abstract principle, which will never pass away, but to the superiority of knowledge possessed now by an individual" (Dr. Beet).

Love never faileth. The Greek reads literally, Love faileth—no, never. The natural desire of one's heart is for that which will survive as long as personality abides, through all eternity, and this, Paul assures us, we have in love.

For we know in part but partially, "bit by bit," and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect is come, the imperfect will be superseded.

"The visible is the ladder up to the invisible, the temporal is but the scaffolding of the eternal" (Professor Drummond).

Paul next gives a concrete illustration of verses 9 and 10: When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things.

There is a difference between childlikeness and childishness. That little boy was childish when he read this text and said, "I think it was too selfish of Paul to put away his childish things: he might have given them to another little boy." It was childlikeness which Jesus commended when he said, Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter the Kingdom of God.

For now we see in a mirror, darkly: but then face to face. In the best of modern mirrors we see only a reflection, not the reality; in ancient mirrors, which were of round plates of burnished metal, even the reflection was very imperfect. Corinth was famous for its mirrors: recall Macaulay's line about the Roman ladies "who in Corinthian mirrors their own proud smiles behold." Now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known. "According to the apostle, the best thing in this temporal state, is love; but the absolute best, for which the soul longs, is perfect knowledge, knowledge 'face to face,' knowledge in which I shall know God even as known by God" (Harnack).

"And meantime, while we live in the world of reflected light, what is our duty? It is to keep the mirror fit to transmit the light. What is it to have faith in God? It is to be sure that the light, though it comes from behind, is trustworthy and real. What is the great mistake of life? It is to cover over the mirror because it is not the sun, and to be content to sit in the dark. What is it to live? It is to let the light shine over our shoulder and find it the best to work by. And what is it to die? It is simply to turn from the

mirror on the wall and pass out from one's shadowy workroom into the uninterrupted and immediate sunlight of God" (Dr. F. G. Peabody).

Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love. These three are eternal: faith in God will be ours throughout eternity; the eternal life is one of progress, and there will still be room for hope for future good; and love never faileth.

"The attitude of expectancy is an attitude of the soul forever. In the next world, as in this one, we shall go on hoping. There will always be something ahead of us to look forward to, always something better than anything we have yet experienced, always something higher than any height to which we have yet attained, always something more glorious than anything we have yet known. Forever and forever we shall trust and love. Paul today is still hoping" (Dr. Charles E. Jefferson).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Where was Corinth? What experiences did Paul have in Corinth? What did Paul say in an earlier lesson about our debt of love?

The First Epistle to the Corinthians. It was to the church which Paul founded at Corinth (last lesson) that Paul wrote the letter which we call First Corinthians. He wrote it from Ephesus, probably in 57 A. D.

In this letter Paul combats the false reports which were being circulated about himself and his authority, exhorts his readers to Christian unity, and rebukes their immoralities. In it we see Paul as the shepherd of souls. His regard for his flock has been compared to that of a father for a promising son beset with temptations, whose character combined great excellencies with great defects. The letter shows Paul's penetrating insight, profound reflections, and practical wisdom, his liberality in all matters of indifference, and his strictness in all matters of right and wrong.

Ancient Metal Mirror

The great theme of the letter is the professing Christian's need of practical godliness. The keynote may be taken as 3.16: "Ye are the temple of God"—therefore you must live lives of sanctity and service.

The two great chapters of the letter are the thirteenth and fifteenth. Professor William Lyon Phelps declares that they are peaks of such lofty grandeur that they tower above everything else in the world's literature except the actual words of Jesus in the Gospels.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. Knowledge alone, or knowledge plus the art of presentation, is not enough for a teacher—he must possess love also. With interest in the subject of teaching must be combined interest in those taught. A teacher must have the temporal and spiritual welfare of his scholars at heart, and he must show that he has. Said a church member of his pastor: "He tells us that if we do right, we shall go to Heaven; but, if we do not, we shall go to hell. He doesn't seem to care much which." Such teaching will never accomplish results. We love those for whom we do something which it costs us to do—hence there can be few Sunday-school teachers who are lacking in love. There may be some, however, who are lacking in the ability to show their love. Anyone who really regrets that lack can learn.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
LOVE, THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

Beginning the Lesson. They were jealous of one another in the church at Corinth. Many of them aspired to be conspicuous figures in the church. Some could teach, some could heal—which had the greater gift? Bitter arguments, sharp words, wasted energy resulted from their contentions.

This question concerning "spiritual gifts" Paul answers in chapters twelve, thirteen and fourteen. In chapter twelve he argues that there are diverse gifts, but the Spirit is the same; in chapter fourteen, that the gift of prophecy is better than the gift of tongues; but in the midst of these arguments he suddenly stops and writes chapter thirteen.

It is as if the pity of it all overwhelms him. "See," he writes, "covet earnestly the best gifts," and always remember that there is "a more excellent way"; and then he contrasts the spirit they are showing with a spirit guided by love, teaches them what they would and what they would not do if love actuated all their actions, shows them how superior love is to all else.

An Appreciation of the Thirteenth Chapter of First Corinthians. Paul's favorite idea is love, and it finds immortal expression in the thirteenth chapter of his First Letter to the Corinthians. This is Paul's masterpiece. It is one of the few Pauline passages which stand on a level with the words of Jesus. It is one of the brightest jewels of the Christian religion. It is a world classic, and will outlive all the classics of Greece and Rome. Its language is so rhythmic that it has become the fashion to call it a song, or a hymn. It is not a poem, but it has in it the subtle music of a poet's heart. It is the noblest description of love ever penned, and will be treasured as long as mankind prizes things that are beautiful.—Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

Henry Drummond's Life and Book. Mr. Dwight L. Moody said of Henry Drummond: "Some men take an occasional journey into the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, but Henry Drummond was a man who lived there constantly. No man has ever been with me for any length of time that I did not see something that was unlike Christ, and I often see it in myself, but not in Henry Drummond. All the time we were together he was a Christlike man and often a rebuke to me."

When Lilavati Singh of India was lecturing in our country she said: "Eight years ago I read a booklet sent me. It was Drummond's The Greatest Thing in the World. As I sat reading it, the beauty of the thought so filled my soul that I could not finish the book, and I went into my room and knelt down beside my bed, and I thanked God for having taught me the English language so that I could read books like that." (If anyone in your class has not read Drummond's book, you can do him no greater service than to induce him to read it.)

Liking and Loving. You don't find much in the New Testament about likes and dislikes. They are not positive enough. I don't care very much, myself, whether people like me or dislike me. A man who likes me puts me on a par, in his affections, with something he had for breakfast. And if he dislikes me—well, I'm sorry I haven't character enough to make him hate me. Then I might do something with him. But if he simply doesn't like me—well, that isn't worth while wasting any time over.

There are things about me which some of my dearest friends do not like at all. Some of them do not like my voice—and they never will. They simply can't. Others do not like my manner—it isn't likable. Others do not like some of the things I say. Nor the way I say them. I know all this. But I do not care. For I know that these friends love me, in spite of their dislikings. And some of these men I love so loyally—I think I could die for them, if need be. What need they, or what do they care, then, if they have some traits and habits I do not like?

I suppose Jesus did not like some of the characteristics of some of his disciples. He did not like their ambitions concerning the best seats in the kingdom, the highest places and the honors. He didn't like their vindictive desire to call down fire from heaven upon the unbelieving. He did not like their "little faith." He did not like their disputes with one another. But, oh, how he loved these men—loved them as "his own"; "loved them to the uttermost."

You can't always like people. You can't like all Christians. You do not like all the members of your own church. But you can love them. Not only can—you must. When you say you can't love those for whom Christ died, you confess yourself most unlovely.

"I can't make myself love where I don't want to." Oh, yes you can. Because it is more than a human inclination; it is more than an attraction of congeniality. It is more than a supreme development of liking. "Loving" is a duty. It is a command of Christ. You may not be able to make yourself "like" people, even your friends. But you can love your friends. If you are a Christian you will love your enemies.—Robert J. Burdette.

How to Learn Love. Religion is not a strange or added thing, but the inspiration of the secular life. Is life not full of opportunities for learning love? Life is not a holiday, but an education. And the one eternal lesson for us all is how better we can love. What makes a man a good linguist, a good stenographer? Practice. What makes a man a good man? Practice. Love is not a thing of enthusiastic emotion. It is a rich, strong, manly, vigorous expression of the whole round Christian character—the Christlike nature in its fullest development, and the constituents of this great character are only to be built up by ceaseless practice.—Condensed from The Greatest Thing in the World, by Henry Drummond.

Bring Love into Daily Living. The cactus deserts of Mexico are strikingly rich in the form and beauty of their blossoms, but it is awfully thorny vegetation. Christians, too, often resemble these paradoxical plants, excellent in many respects, yet they are uncomfortable to live with. Love makes the thornless life. As a French writer puts it, "Can any discovery in life be more charming than to scratch away the snow and find a flower beneath?" Let us surprise our friends with the flower. The philosophy of the Christian life is to keep on translating poetry into action. To bring love into commonplace, everyday intercourse is a sublime achievement.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson.

Love is Gladdened by Goodness. It is not enough to admit that there is goodness; not enough even to praise it. If we have the love of Christ in our hearts it will give us a thrill of delight to discover the least trace of his presence in human lives. We shall be like God himself, who rejoices when there is one sinner who returns to him. It is a wonderful picture Jesus gives of heaven in the mood of a high festival when a single soul returns; all the heavenly host shouting for joy because some poor soul, of little account here, repents. If we would be perfect as our Father is perfect, we, too, shall rejoice in goodness.

And is it so very hard for love to find goodness? We read the record in the paper of the things that happen; of necessity a big space is given to crime and wrong; a certain deed of cruelty is wrought in a certain suburb, and it seems to stain the very name; when we go through it we say, "This is the place where so-and-so lived." And yet in that place there are tens of thousands living bravely and patiently their lives, and therefore the heart with the love of Christ has a pang of joy when it passes down the dull streets. To be a specialist in goodness, to know it even when it is half hidden, to rejoice in it, as a collector rejoices in a picture or a chair or a rare book, this is a career for love.—Edward Shillito.

Is a Life of Love Practical amid Modern Conditions? Paul answers, Yes. He lived a life of love in the age of Nero. He lived a life of self-forgetful service in Corinth and Athens and Rome. He had no supernatural origin or endowment, no miraculous knowledge or reservoir of power. He had our limitations and infirmities, wrestled with innumerable problems and trials, but loved everybody and found that love never failed. He says—"Follow me as I follow Christ." He is a frail and suffering mortal winning his way by courage and patience, loving men in their unloveliness, sacrificing for them, however suspicious and ungrateful, suffering long and yet never grumpy or sullen or bitter, always kind. Like the love of Christ, his love never failed.—Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, in The Character of Paul.

The Law of Love in National Affairs. The Great War was the product of a false and unchristian conception of the relations of men to one another. Has the Church ever really set itself to apply the love of Christ to social and national relations? Has the world, West and East, ever had cause to know that the Church is above all else a body of people who, in consequence of the amazing experience that God is love, are resolved that so far as in them lies the relations of men with one another shall be regulated by the principles of love and brotherhood?

In the failure of the Church to declare and practise that which belongs to its innermost essence we are all alike involved. In every feeling of contempt for other men, in every instinct of class superiority or hatred, in all dislike of the foreigner because he is foreign, in all readiness to profit at the cost of another's loss, we have fostered the spirit which brought forth in the war its inevitable fruits.—Dr. J. H. Oldham.

Love Beareth All Things, Endureth All Things. Should we not have looked to hear, not what love can bear, but what love can do? Nay, my soul, Paul is right, and thou art wrong. Art thou saying, either to thy Christ or to thy brother, "Bid me that I come to thee on the waters"? I would dissuade thee from such a prayer. It is not the *height* of the aim that makes me dissuade thee. I do not think the aim

high enough, the test sure enough. Can thy love bear life's little frictions? Can it bear the frettings by the world's prose? Can it bear to be itself misunderstood, misinterpreted? Can it endure a delay in the response; can it support those moments of silence where there is no return? If thy love can bear that and not die, it is worthy of Paul's hymn.—George Matheson, in Times of Retirement.

For Discussion. 1. Paul's practical conception of the Christian life.

2. Paul's faith, hope, love. See chapters XXI, XXII, and XXIII of Dr. Jefferson's The Character of Paul.

3. It is because men have been false to the fundamental law of love that the world has been at war. Love which is the fulfilling of the law must solve among nations the difficulties of the future and save the world.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What part have "vested interests" played in the liquor traffic? Opium traffic? Sabbath traffic? 2. What has the Church to hear from commercialism? 3. What characteristics does the love of money develop? 4. Name some wealthy men who do not love their money for its own sake. 5. What should be one's atttiude toward money?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
"THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD"

Beginning the Lesson. Once upon a time, says a writer in The Christian Advocate, there was a man who had a very wonderful mantle, by which he was able to do many things. Whenever he put it on and went abroad he always appeared to all to be noble and high-minded and generous, a great, good man. Besides this, he could actually work miracles with his robe, and so change a person that you would scarcely know him. With it he could make a rough and surly and disagreeable man gentle and peaceable and friendly disposed toward him—a friend out of an enemy.

Who was this owner and what of his robe? His name was none other than Paul, and his robe was the beautiful garment of love. He always wore it when he went about doing good, trying to follow in the footsteps of the Master. He said and wrote much to lead others to wear it. In the thirteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians he describes this wonderful garment of love.

The Spectrum of Love. As you have seen a man of science take a beam of light and pass it through a crystal prism, as you have seen it come out on the other side of the prism broken up into its component colors—red, and blue, and yellow, and violet, and orange, and all the colors of the rainbow—so Paul passes this thing, Love, through the magnificent prism of his inspired intellect, and it comes out on the other side broken up into its elements. And in these few words we have what one might call the Spectrum of Love, the Analysis of Love.

Notice that they have common names; that they are virtues which we hear about every day; that they are things which can be practiced by every man in any place in life. Patience, "love suffereth long"; kindness, "and is kind"; generosity, "love envieth not"; humility, "love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up"; courtesy, "doth not behave itself unseemly"; unselfishness, "seeketh not its own"; good temper, "is not provoked"; guilelessness, "taketh not account of evil"; sincerity, "rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth."—Henry Drummond, in The Greatest Thing in the World.

A Description of Love. Our word *patience* is borrowed from the Latin, and means *suffering*. If we love others we shall be patient with them, longsuffering toward them. "How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?" Peter questioned, and you remember that Jesus answered, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." Love suffereth long.

Once a boy put out his foot for another to stumble over as he came out of the schoolyard gate. The boy was tripped up, and fell heavily upon the stone walk. The offender was laughing heartily when he looked around and saw his teacher by his side. "Was that kind?" the teacher questioned. How do you think the boy felt? Was there any love in his heart when he did that deed? Love is kind.

Cain, you know, was a farmer, and his brother Abel was a shepherd. Some one imagines Cain saying to himself: "Father is putting all the hard work on me. I have to plow and sow, and reap, and do all the rough labor about this farm, and all that Abel has to do is to sit on a rock under a nice shade tree and watch a few sheep all day." We know that Cain was envious and jealous of his brother, and when

his own offering of fruit was not accepted by God, but Abel's lamb was, Cain was so angry that he killed Abel. Love envieth not.

Once a small boy exclaimed happily, "There, I jumped two feet high that time," but his older brother spoiled his happiness by saying to him, "Pooh! Think that is great, do you? Why, I can jump four feet high!" Love thinks not of self, to boast what it can do; love thinks of others. Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

There is an Eastern proverb which says, "By patience and perseverance and a bottle of sweet oil, the snail at length reaches Jerusalem." What do you think is meant by the "bottle of sweet oil"? The oil of courtesy to others helps much along the long, rough road of life. One who is ruled by love will not be guilty of rude manners or discourteous deeds of which he is afterwards ashamed, for love doth not behave itself unseemly.

Fishermen say that a fish's life is a wholly selfish life. A fish lives only to eat others, and to avoid being eaten itself. There are some human beings whose lives are just as selfish. Don't be selfish, or "shell-fish," as a little girl once read the word. Love seeketh not its own.

Two kinds of gum are used upon postage stamps, a softer gum for winter than is used in summer. The harder gum, which is necessary to keep the stamps from sticking together in summer, makes the stamps curl up in winter, rendering them difficult to handle. "Some people are like stamps. If it suits them, they are good-natured; but if the weather is unpleasant, they are unpleasant." People who are ruled by love are always good-natured, for love is not provoked.

Dr. Henry van Dyke gives two good rules which he says ought to be written on every heart: Never believe anything bad about anybody unless you positively know it is true; never tell even that unless you feel that it is absolutely necessary, and that God is listening while you tell it. Love taketh not account of evil.

Love is sincere. It rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth. Love beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

How to Tell Genuine Love. The ruby is a very precious stone, but some other stones closely resemble it—such as the garnet and the spinel. Sometimes only experts are able to tell the difference. If the expert is in doubt he takes an instrument called a dichroscope and examines the stone through it. The dichroscope makes him see double. It gives him two images of the same stone. If the one image be orange-red and the other carmine-red, then the expert knows he is looking at the real ruby, for the garnet and the spinel do not show two colors under the dichroscope.

Real love is like the ruby: it stands the test of the dichroscope, it divides in two. What do I mean by that? Let me tell you in a story.

A teacher was once trying to explain love to a class of tiny tots. She knew it was useless to give them an explanation out of a dictionary, so she asked instead if any of them could show her what love meant. At first all were silent. Then one little maiden of six rose shyly from her seat, went to the teacher and flinging her arms around the teacher's neck, gave her a good hug, and said "That's love." "Yes," said the teacher, and smiled. "That is love. But love is something more. Can you show me what more love is?" The little girl thought a moment. Then she began to put the chairs in order, and to clean the blackboard. When she had finished she said, "Love is helping people, too."

That little girl was right. Love is not merely saying, it is doing. This world would be a happier place if there was a little more telling people that we loved them. But that is only one-half of love, it is only one image of the ruby, the orange-red. It leaves out the other image, the carmine-red, and without it we cannot have real love any more than we can have a real ruby. The love that stops at words and doesn't go on to deeds is not, after all, worth much.—Condensed from a Story in The Expository Times.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

This world is full of beauty, as other worlds above;
And, if we did our duty, it might be full of love.—Gerald Massey.

The glory of life is to love, not to be loved—Dr. Hugh Black.

Love works no ill to his neighbor.—Paul.

Let all things that ye do be done in love.—Paul.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson.

1. What cities did Paul revisit on his Third Missionary Journey before reaching Ephesus? (Acts. 18.23—19.1.) 2. Tell the story about the burning of books at Ephesus. (Acts 19.13-20.) 3. Why did Demetrius give two reasons in verse 27? 4. Who wrote the words of our Golden Text? 5. Is money itself an evil thing?

PAUL IN EPHESUS

GOLDEN TEXT: For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. 1 Timothy 6.10

LESSON Acts 18.18 to 19.41 DEVOTIONAL READING Isaiah 55.8-13

ACTS 19.23 And about that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no little business unto the craftsmen; 25 whom he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth. 26 And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they are no gods, that are made with hands: 27 and not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence whom all Asia and the world worshipeth. 28 And when they heard this they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians. 29 And the city was filled with the confusion: and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel. 30 And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. 31 And certain also of the Asiarchs, being his friends, sent unto him and besought him not to adventure himself into the theatre. 32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was in confusion; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. 33 And they brought Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made a defence unto the people. 34 But when they perceived that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. A SILVERSMITH STIRS UP A RIOT AGAINST PAUL AT EPHESUS, verses 23-28. The goddess Diana (Artemis), whose chief temple was at Ephesus, was the mother-goddess, the goddess of fertility, "the fountain of nourishment, the reproductive power that kept the great world ever the same amid the constant flux of things." Her shrine was constantly visited by crowds of pilgrims, and the making of miniature shrines for them and for the Ephesians was an important industry in Ephesus. There were tiny shrines which were worn as amulets, larger ones which were offered as gifts to the goddess, or were kept in the homes and even placed in the grave beside the corpse "as a sign that the dead had gone back to the mother who bore him." Many of these little shrines made of marble or terra cotta have been found, but none of silver, the latter having been melted, no doubt, because of their intrinsic value. It was among the makers of these small shrines that no small stir arose concerning Christianity, or the Way.

Demetrius, a silversmith and maker of silver shrines, naturally gave considerable business to craftsmen and had therefore a hold upon them. These he gathered together with the workmen of like occupation, workers in terra cotta and marble, and reminded them that their prosperity came from their business. And then he reminded them how "this Paul" not only in Ephesus but throughout all the Province of Asia had made many people believe that gods made with hands were not gods. There was grave danger that their trade would be taken away from them.

"How was the falling off of the sale of the silver shrines to be accounted for? The springs of character affected the streams of conduct. Not by denouncing shrines but by so changing men and women that they did not need shrines of Diana—thus the victory was won. A great phrase of Dr. Chalmers describes what wrought their condition—"the expulsive power of a new affection." This is the one way of victory, if the Church is to win real victories. In America there grows a tree called the scrub-oak. Traveling through the country in the springtime, we see this scrub-oak covered still with the leaves of last year. Every other tree is stripped by the tempests of the autumn and winter. But gradually, in the springtime, the leaves drop off the scrub-oak, because of the rising of the new life. That which the tempest from without never accomplishes, the rising life within does accomplish. That was the victory in Ephesus. There was no demonstration

against idolatry, but realization of fellowship with God" (Dr. S. Campbell Morgan).

There was even danger, Demetrius told his fellow-craftsmen, that the temple of the great goddess Diana would fall into disrepute, that she would lose her eminent position. "See how wherever there is idolatry, in every case we find money at the bottom of it; it was not their religion, because they thought that in danger; no, it was for their lucrative craft, that it would have nothing to work upon" (Chrysostom).

"There is nothing more common than for men to hang one motive outside where it can be seen, and keep the others in the background to turn the machine."

"The craftsmen were directed and organized by Demetrius, evidently as guild master. The silversmiths were, of course, the craftsmen of higher standing, greater skill in delicate work, larger profits, and therefore greater wealth and influence, than the potters and marble-workers. How natural, then, it is that it should be a silversmith who gathered together a meeting of the associated trades and organized a disturbance! The less educated workmen followed the lead of the great artisan" (W. M. Ramsay). Demetrius succeeded in arousing the fury of the others, and they shouted "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

"It is always the endeavor of Mammon to hold the transient so close as to blind us to the eternal; a silver shrine can be so held that it shuts out God" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

II. PAUL'S COMPANIONS SEIZED, verse 29. In Greek cities the theater was the place not only for games, but for popular assemblies. The theater at Ephesus was an immense, roofless building resembling a modern hippodrome. Tiers of seats rose one above another save on the straight side where the stage was on a level with the lowest seats. Its capacity has been variously estimated from twenty-seven to fifty-six thousand. The frantic mob siezed Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions, and rushed with them into the theater. Nothing further is known about Gaius. Aristarchus is mentioned in Acts 20.4; 27.2; Col. 4.10; Philemon 24.

III. PAUL IS KEPT FROM THE MOB, verses 30, 31. Paul would have rushed into the temple to save his friends had he not been restrained by the disciples and also by messages from certain Asiarchs who were his friends and who feared for his life should he venture into the mob's presence. The Asiarchs were officers of the Province of Asia, and their presence in Ephesus at this time has led to the supposition that it was May, the time of the Ephesian games. The historian Momsen tells us that only a wealthy man could be an Asiarch, for he had to bear a large share of the expenses of the games. It was an honorary position much sought after on account of its outward splendor. The festal entrance into the town in purple dress and with chaplet on the head, preceded by a procession of boys swinging their vessels of incense, was a much coveted honor.

"To go into the city of Ephesus and stand up in some public square and proclaim, 'Great is Jesus of Nazareth,' was to carry your life in your hands, to arouse the enmity of rivalry, to stir the fires of pride and prejudice, and to enlist against you all the fiercest hatreds of religious passion. To say the name of Jesus when everybody else was saying the name of Diana, was to gamble with your safety and to put your life in hazard" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

"A mob has no brains to think, no breast to feel, and no reason to judge between right and wrong. Mob law is one of the greatest dangers in a republican form of government. When democracy becomes mobocracy, the days of the republic will be numbered" (Dr. Robert S. MacArthur).

IV. ALEXANDER ATTEMPTS TO DEFEND THE JEWS, verses 32, 34. Verse 32 is an admirable description of all mobs: Some cried one thing, and some another; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together! The Jews put Alexander forward to make a defense—doubtless to disclaim for himself and his fellow Jews any sympathy with Paul's words. As all Jews condemned idolatry, they might well fear that their lives would be in danger from the infuriated mob. It is thought that this Alexander was Alexander the coppersmith who afterwards "did much evil" to Paul, 1 Tim. 1.20; 2 Tim. 4.14. The mob, however, refused to hear him because he was a Jew. "A Jew, though tolerated by law, and even respected for his wealth and for his strange religious lore, was no general favorite; and now that the Ephesians were charged with the electricity of patriotic and religious favor,

the sight of a Jew daring to address them in their theater was just the stimulus to create an explosion."

For about two hours all with one voice kept shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" They only knew from the shouts of the first rioters that the worship of Artemis was concerned; and like a crowd of devotees or howling dervishes, they shouted their invocation of 'Great Artemis!' 'Great Artemis!' was a common formula of devotion and prayer, as is attested by several inscriptions. In this scene we cannot mistake the tone of sarcasm and contempt, as Luke tells of this howling mob; they themselves thought they were performing their devotion, as they repeated the sacred name; but to Luke they were merely howling" (W. M. Ramsay).

Coins of Ephesus Showing the Figure of Diana and the Temple of Diana

"For her, two noisy hours of fierce acclaim
When shook the theater with craftsmen's cheers;
For him her worshippers maligned, a Name
That calms the clamors of the endless years"
(John Elliot Bowman).

V. THE TOWN CLERK QUELLS THE RIOT, verses 35-41. "The city of Ephesus was 'free' and retained its Greek constitution, which was democratic in form. There was a Senate, to which power gravitated in imperial times. But nominally Ephesus was still governed by the people. An assembly was held three times a month, and these meetings were the regular, or ordinary, assemblies. The substantial authority of the assembly was in the hands of its secretary, or town clerk—the official who summoned and dismissed the assembly, prepared the official decrees, kept the minutes and acted as chairman. Thus the town clerk would naturally be one of the magnates of the city; and this we find to have been the case from the inscriptions, in which the secretary often appeared as holding also the highest offices" (W. M. Ramsay).

The town clerk appeared on the scene and quieted the mob at once by saying there was no necessity for their becoming excited in defense of Diana; her worship was too well established to be injured by a new religious sect. "Who does not know," he questioned, "that Ephesus is temple-keeper of the great Diana, and of the image that fell down from Jupiter?" "Particular cities were appointed guardians of particular deities; and thus Ephesus received the honorable appellation of the guardian of the great Diana. This title is of frequent occurrence on the coins of Ephesus. Thus one of the coins of Nero has on it the figure of the temple of Diana, with the word *neokoron,* temple-keeper; a coin which is of peculiar interest, as it was contemporary with the time of Paul's residence in Ephesus." The italics in the clause, the image which fell down from Jupiter, show that the word *image* is not in the original Greek; it has been supplied by the translators. This has given rise to the supposition that the image may not have been an idol but a meteoric stone. Jupiter was the supreme deity; priests would say that the image was a gift from Jupiter.

Coin of Ephesus Containing a Reference to a Town Clerk

"Whence do men get the vagaries, whimsies, and fetishes which too ignorantly they worship? These may by an untutored faith be ascribed to images that have literally fallen down from heaven. Today there are in the world thousands of idols, made indeed by the hands of men, which vaguely suggest to the minds of kneeling devotees a superhuman origin, if not a distinctly divine power. Even Christendom in one of its numerous branches has not purged itself from the worship of relics. Jupiter from all accounts has taken a great interest in men, and sprinkled his 'images' all over the earth" (Zion's Herald).

The town clerk handled the angry mob wisely. It could not be gainsaid that Ephesus was the temple-keeper of the great Diana, he told them, and then bade them be quiet and do nothing rash.

"The counsel is one that we may all with profit take to ourselves and put down among our life maxims—'Do nothing rash.' Rash people are forever getting themselves and their friends into trouble. They are continually doing things today which tomorrow they regret and wish they had not done. A great many of us have tongues that are always speaking rash words. We make rash promises that we fail to keep. We speak rashly when we are angry and then lose friends by our hasty sayings. A very large percentage of the blunders many of us make are due to rashness and could be prevented if we could always stop to think before we speak or act. It would be well for all of us to take counsel frequently of the town clerk of Ephesus" (Dr. J. R. Miller).

Court days were held in Ephesus, when justice was administered by the proconsul, who represented the supreme authority of Rome, and the town clerk next reminded

the mob that if Demetrius had anything to prefer against the men brought into the temple as prisoners, who were neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of the goddess, they could do this before that law court. Or they could wait till the next regular assembly and bring any matter before the people. Moreover, they ran the risk of being held accountable for the uproar, for which there was no cause, he warned them, and then he dismisses them.

Paul escaped with his life, but not long afterward he left the city. He was greatly dejected, "weighted down exceedingly," as he wrote the Corinthians, because of "our affliction which befell us in Asia."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What traveling companions of Paul have we heard about? How was Paul saved from danger at Damascus? How did friends save him from harm when he first preached at Jerusalem? What did friends do for him at Thessalonica to get him away from a mob? How did friends help him away from Berœa? Who persecuted Paul at Philippi because of pecuniary loss?

The Beginning of Paul's Third Missionary Journey. Two weeks ago we left Paul at Antioch in Syria on his return from his Second great Missionary Journey. He spent some time there and then started forth again. Passing through Tarsus and the Cilician Gates, he revisited in order the churches he had founded in Galatia and Phrygia—Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, and "established all the

disciples." Then he continued his journey to Ephesus, where he remained from 54 to 57 A. D., a longer time than in any other city which he founded. During this time he wrote First Corinthians, and possibly organized the churches of Colossæ and Hierapolis, and others besides Ephesus of the "Seven Churches in Asia," Rev. 1.11.

Paul at Ephesus. Paul here followed his customary method of speaking first to the Jews, but when, instead of heeding his message, they spoke evil of Christianity (the life that accorded with the Way of Christ), Paul left the synagogue and for two years used the lecture-room of Tyrannus for his teaching. He wrought miracles in the name of Jesus, and certain Jewish exorcists imitated him, undertaking to use the name as a charm, till a man possessed of an evil spirit overpowered and so injured them that they fled. Many of the converts who had continued to practise magic now came and confessed their deeds, and some of them brought their parchment rolls and burned them. So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

For the Blackboard. Paul's Third Missionary Journey. Antioch of Syria, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch of Pisidia, Ephesus.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Ephesus, the capital of the Roman Province of Asia, ranked with Antioch and Alexandria as one of the three great cities of the Eastern Mediterranean. In Paul's day it was the largest city of Asia Minor. It had a fine harbor for the largest sea-going vessels of the time, and it carried on a great commerce.

One of the Seven Wonders of the world was the great temple of Diana. The sun in its course saw nothing more magnificent, so the saying ran. All the cities of Asia had shared in its building. It was entirely of white marble, as long as St. Paul's Cathedral, London, and twice as broad. One hundred and twenty jasper columns on Parian marble bases, each one the gift of a king, supported the roof of cedar. On these pillars hung gifts of priceless value, "the motive offerings of grateful superstition." Masterpieces of Praxiteles and Phidias and other great sculptors and painters, wonderful tapestries and carvings and gold and silver vases, adorned the temple. At the end of the building there was a great altar, and behind it in a dark shrine stood the image of Diana which the people believed had fallen down from the sky.

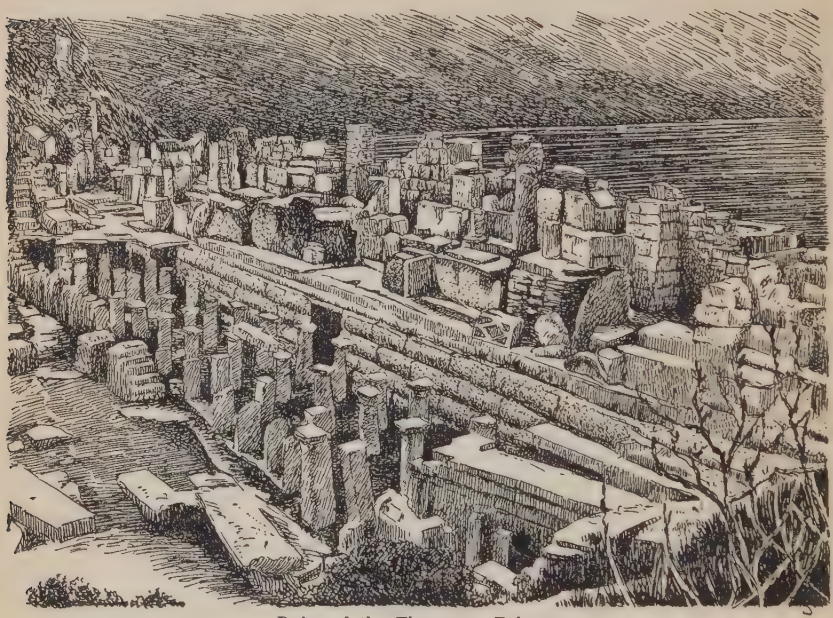
A mass of ruins, a reedy marsh and a squalid Turkish village now occupy that large expanse of what was once proud Ephesus. Professor Robert W. Rogers has given a most interesting account of how the city was lost and found again. Condensed, it is as follows:—

"After the days of the great apostle, the city had many reverses. Its harbor silted up, and the works undertaken to preserve it only increased the rapidity of its destruction. Christianity swept over Asia Minor, and the temple lost its crowd of frequenters. The ever-flowing river Cayster flowed more slowly still, and overflowed the lower levels of the plain till the Christian inhabitants moved away to the higher slopes. In Byzantine times the Emperor Justinian built a great church named after St. John the Divine, whose lofty walls looked down disdainfully upon the ruins of the temple Artemis, 'whom all the world worshipeth.' The conquering Turks came, and renamed the city where they settled, Ayasaluk, which is nothing but a corruption of Ayos Theologos, which came from *Hagio Theologos,* 'holy theologian,' that is, John the Divine. So were ancient Ephesus and its temple lost.

"In May, 1863, an Englishman named John T. Wood began the work of excavation in Ephesus. He worked a year with no result. His funds gave out, and he applied to the British Museum for more. He received a hundred pounds, but was required to spend them in exploring the ruins of the Odeum, where he well knew no temple was to be found. In 1866 a grant from the British Museum was received with instructions to search the ruins of the great theater. For two whole years he worked on the theater, and at the end of the period found the remains of a great road, which he felt sure must have led to the temple. The trustees of the Museum gave two hundred pounds more, with a statement that they would give no more unless he produced that temple! Then came victory. He soon found the corner of the wall, which Augustus built in 6 B. C. to enclose the temple area, with the inscriptions recording the fact. On the last day of the year 1869 the marble pavement of the temple, so long lost, so long sought for, was at last actually found at a depth of nearly twenty feet below the present surface of the ground."

Our illustration shows the ruins of the theater as they look today. A few years ago as I sat on one of the highest marble "stalls," memories of the exciting scenes

recorded in The Acts crowded thick and fast, and, despite the vast solitude which now reigns there, I could picture that excited, shouting throng surging toward me, the memory of which must have led Paul to say, "I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus." In the British Museum there is an "Ephesus Room" which is full of interest for Bible students. Here are sculptured "drums" that have been recovered



Ruins of the Theater at Ephesus

from the ruins, a beautiful column with its Ionic capital, and immense pillars that once formed part of the temple of Diana.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

A writer in Forward makes a study of the way in which the silversmith and the town clerk swayed men. The silversmith made his appeal to passion and to selfishness, and it did not take long to raise a howling mob ready to do his will. The town clerk, too, had self-interest at stake, for such tumult might imperil his office, and was like the silversmith also in his knowledge of men and how to sway them. He made his appeal to pride and the fear of evil consequences, and the great excitement suddenly appeared a ridiculous ado about nothing. From this study the writer draws the lesson that to understand human nature, to learn to know our fellowmortals and the feelings and impulses that rule them, is necessary for every one who would succeed in life. Many a teacher fails because he does not know his pupils, because he cannot place himself on their level, enter into their views of things, understand their likes and dislikes and the motives that influence them.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
MONEY OR CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. Gibbon, the historian, says that the various forms of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were considered by the people as equally true, by the philosophers as equally false, and by the magistrates as equally useful. Jewish fanaticism excited the wonder of the tolerant, easy-going indifferentism of the ordinary pagans, who did not care two straws whether their neighbor worshiped twenty gods or twenty-one. In the Graeo-Roman world everyone was quite accustomed to the introduction of new deities from other countries. The priests of Diana

looked on with indifference; rather, the growth of each new superstition added to the influence of Diana and her priests! Why, then, do we hear that "There arose no small stir concerning the Way" at Ephesus?

A Conflict with Vested Interests. In city after city opposition from the Jews met Paul—at Antioch, in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Thessalonica, Berœa, Corinth. At Philippi and Ephesus the Gentiles were the aggressors. At Philippi it was the masters of the "maid having a spirit of divination" who stirred up the trouble; it was when they saw that the hope of their gain was gone that they accused Paul and Silas before the magistrates of setting forth "customs not lawful for Romans," and thus concealing their own interests under the cloak of patriotic zeal, stirred up the mob against the missionaries.

A like motive actuated the instigations of the mob at Ephesus. It was the manufacture of images and shrines which was endangered by Paul's preaching against idolatry. If the people continued to turn away from the worship of Diana to the worship of God, there would soon be no sale for these images. The worship of Diana was endangered by "this Paul," they cried, while their real motive for stirring up the uproar was that their trade was endangered.

Christianity was weighed in one side of the scales and the shrines of Diana in the other. A like estimate was made by Pliny in a letter to Trajan, written about 112 A. D., in which he approved of the latter's persecution of the Christians because it had resulted in a greater demand for fodder for the cattle raised for sacrifice.

The Gospel in Athens and in Ephesus. In Athens the Gospel was not sensational enough for ears that were ever tingling to hear some new thing. Paul's message was too spiritual and too remote from the immediate testimony of the senses, and therefore of little practical account and interest. In Ephesus, however, the gospel was too revolutionary. It affected practical affairs too much; it was instantly recognized that it spelled the doom of Diana. Her sacred image, descended from heaven, would no longer be an object of reverence. Paul and his companion evangelist were thieves of men's hearts, stealing them away from the true worship. Diana, Ephesus and Heaven itself were all at stake under the proclamation of a more rational truth and a more spiritual ideal. And withal it would paralyze the pocket-nerve, since it would undermine the trade of the silversmiths; and Paul might as well expect mercy from a plumbers' convention as to expect leniency from the guild that worshiped the silver standard.—Dr. Robert E. Brown.

A Silversmith

Livingstone and Vested Interests. When the Portugese offered Livingstone a large sum for his little steamer "Lady Nyanza," he discovered that they intended to use her in the slave trade. No sum was sufficient to buy her for this purpose. Livingstone himself took the steamer to Bombay, 2,500 miles away, yet the nearest market, rather than let her fall into such a fate.

Commercialism and the Church. Money today is king. The commercialism of our day is mastering us, and especially in the United States of America. The church as well as the business world is thrilled through and through with this controlling craze which we term commercialism.

The wealth of this country is astounding, almost incredible. Yet we must admit that our churches, although liberal enough when emotionally affected, are certainly lacking in sufficient funds with which to reach out into new work, and appeal after appeal has to go from our great missionary boards to meet the needs of work already established. Yet we have a membership larger than ever before in the history of our country, and membership representing relatively larger means than ever before.

Either commercialism is king, or Christ is King. He said, "Render unto Cæsar," but he also said "Render unto God." Something the Church must do, or this subtle spread of monetary contagion and commercial fever will prostrate the body of the Church. To me nothing has so depleted the treasury of the Church in her gifts and robbed her of the joy, as the modern habit of raising money for Christ's work by commercial methods. Instead of *giving* to God, it has been *selling* and *buying* under the false definition of giving. "How shall we raise a thousand dollars?" is the cry.

It is answered by a fair, a concert, an entertainment, and this is called "giving." Is not the Church, partly at least, responsible for giving the people the idea that they must *get something* for all they give? In other words, our offerings to God are tinged with the "commercial spirit" of today.

The spread of Sunday disorder and Sunday labor is largely due to this money craze. "Six days shalt thou labor" does not suffice. The West, as well as many a city of the North, East and South, also, is fast losing the custom of Sunday closing. Cigar stores, barber shops, meat markets, bakeries, candy stores, news stands, theaters, concert halls, restaurants, soda fountains are to be found open on the Lord's Day. Let us remember that a commercialized Sabbath, either by pleasure or by labor, means the religious conditions of France rather than the religious ardor of Scotland and Wales.—Condensed from a Sermon by Dr. John Timothy Stone.

Not Money but the Love of Money is a Root of All Kinds of Evil. It is not money itself, nor even the desire to acquire money in abundance, that is the root of many kinds of evil. Money is a force like fire which can be put to good or ill uses. It is good to have money, to have it in abundance, and to make it serve yourself and others and God. It is evil to love money as a miser does, to hoard it for no purpose, to spend it for evil things, to let it blind your eyes to the things more valuable than money, things that money cannot buy. "Oh, wealth is a blessing worthy the best energies of the best minds when it falls into the hands that are consecrated to ideals; when it is intrusted to consciences that feel the commanding power of the Spirit." To change slightly the saying of another, a millionaire in gold will be blessed and will be a blessing if he is also a millionaire in soul. Money may be the root of much good.

For Discussion. 1. Abuses which exist because of private interests involved.

2. The love of money seems to be a growing evil.—Gladstone.

3. The mob spirit. Under mob excitement high-minded citizens lose control of themselves and behave like wild beasts.

Questions to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What progress has been made this year in the fight to enforce the Eighteenth Amendment? 2. What progress toward the elimination of the liquor evil has been made in other countries? 3. Is there any good fighting where we live in which we should engage?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
DIANA OR CHRIST

Beginning the Lesson. You have all heard of the Seven Wonders of the world. Can you name them? One was the pyramids of Egypt, of which you have seen many pictures. A second was the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. These were terraces on the side of a hill so arranged as to appear hanging. Another was the colossus at Rhodes: the figure of a man so immense that one foot stood on one side of the harbor and the other foot on the other side, and between them the ships passed. It is from this statue that we have our word *colossal.* Then there were the Pharos of Alexandria, a famous lighthouse, the tomb of Mausolos (whence our word *mausolem*), the statue of Jupiter at Athens, by Phidias, and—the temple of Diana at Ephesus.

Which of these Seven Wonders came into our story of the life of Paul? Where was Ephesus? (Continue with the Geographical Background and the Text Explained.)

Diana or Christ. When the people of Ephesus began to think calmly and quietly on the words of Demetrius, they must have seen how much of an alarmist he was. For how could this Jew called Paul ever turn the people away from the worship of Diana, or make any one despise the temple of which they were so proud? The thing was absurd. Yet the words of Demetrius came true. Those people did not know that wherever the Jesus of whom Paul told them may go, he is sure to conquer. Nothing and no one can resist his power. The town clerk of Ephesus thought that no harm could possibly come to their religion or to their beautiful temple. These things were far too firmly rooted in the hearts and minds of the people of Asia. But Jesus has a marvelously attractive power, and when men begin to seek after him they turn from all else.—C. T. Merrylees.

Polycarp's Choice. A hundred years after the time of the events we are now studying, in the city of Smyrna, like Ephesus, one of the great cities of the Province of Asia, an immense and madly excited crowd was assembled in the stadium, or

circus. Before them stood a venerable man, Polycarp, a Christian bishop. He had been kept in hiding for several days by his friends, for they knew his life was in danger, but had finally been discovered and brought before the maddened throng. The proconsul urged him to revile Christ, and his life should be spared. "Eighty and six years have I served him," Polycarp calmly answered, "how can I revile my King and my Savior?" Above the tumult of the throng the words were shouted, "This was the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the puller down of our gods, who teacheth numbers not to sacrifice nor worship," and the demand was made that he be thrown to the wild beasts. The games were over, and it was not lawful, the director of the games declared. Then the crowd demanded that he be burned alive, and they had their way; they quickly collected logs and fagots, and Polycarp perished in the flames.

The Love of Money. Ruskin told about the passenger on a sinking steamer near the Pacific coast who fastened a belt about him with two hundred pounds of gold in it, with which his body was found afterwards at the bottom of the sea. And then Ruskin questioned: "Now, as he was sinking, had he the gold or had the gold him?" It is one thing to have gold and use it rightly, and another thing to be had by gold. What are the words of our Golden Text? Who wrote them? To whom?

In the writings of Dr. T. DeWitt Talmadge occurs this illustration of one kind of evil of which the love of money was the root:—

"Once when Rome was besieged, the daughter of its ruler saw the golden bracelets on the left arms of the enemy, and she sent word to them that she would betray her city and surrender it to them if they would only give her those bracelets on their left arms. They accepted the proffer, and that night she opened one of the city gates. The army entered, and, keeping their promise, threw upon her their bracelets, and also their shields, until under their weight she died. All through the ages the same folly has been repeated, and for the trinkets and glittering treasures of this world men and women sell their immortal souls for an everlasting surrender, and die under the shining submergement.

"Here Lies a Soul." "Before reading the story of my life," LeSage makes Gil Blas say, "listen to a tale I am about to tell thee!" And then he tells of two tired and thirsty students who, traveling together, sat down by a roadside spring. Near the spring they noticed a flat stone, and on the stone they detected some letters. The inscription was almost effaced, partly by the teeth of time and partly by the feet of the flocks that came to water at the fountain.

But, after washing it well, they were able to make out the words, "Here is interred the soul of the Licentiate Peter Garcias." The first of the students roared with laughter and treated the affair as purely a joke. "Here lies *a soul!*"—what an idea! A soul under a stone! The second, however, took it more seriously and began to dig. He at length came upon a leather purse containing a hundred ducats, and a card, on which was written in Latin the following sentence: "Thou who hast wit enough to discover the meaning of the inscription, inherit my money, and make a better use of it than I have!"

Poor Peter Garcias felt that his shining ducats had been a curse and not a blessing, because he had loved them for their own sake instead of for the sake of the use to which they could be put. "Make *a better use* of them than I have!" he implored.—F. W. Boreham, in Rubble and Roseleaves.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.—Jesus.

What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?—Jesus.

"I will place no value on anything I have or may possess except it relate to the Kingdom of Christ.—Livingstone.

When riches get into the heart, they are sure to make it poor.—Ram's Horn.

All the greatest things in life, those of mind, heart and soul, are beyond the power of money to buy.—W. G. Jordan.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What does Paul mean by putting on the whole armor of God? 2. What are some of its pieces? Explain Paul's use of each. 3. In Christ's temptations at the beginning of his ministry, how did he use "the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God?"

THE FIGHT AGAINST STRONG DRINK (WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY)

GOLDEN TEXT: Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Ephesians 6.10

LESSON Ephesians 6.1-20 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 94. 1-8

REFERENCE MATERIAL Isaiah 5.12-14, 22, 23; 28.1-8

EPHESIANS 6.10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For our wrestling is not against the flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. 13 Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil *one*. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, 19 and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S SPIRITUAL WARFARE, verses 10, 11. To be a Christian is to be a soldier engaged in warfare against evil, and the strength for the fight comes from God. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God," as Paul wrote to the Corinthians. "Apart from me ye can do nothing," said Jesus himself in our lesson about the Vine and the Branches. "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might": Dr. Jowett thinks this an imperfect translation because it lays too much emphasis upon the soldier and too little upon his Lord, and he refers us to the preferable marginal rendering of the Revised Version: "Be made powerful in the Lord."

"Does not that word sound full of promise for soldiers who are about to storm a difficult position? Let God make you powerful! Such power is not a trophy of battle; it is the fruit of commission. It is a bequest and not a conquest. That power is not something we have to win; it is something we have to receive. The phrase 'in the Lord,' means connection with a power-house whose energy would light up all the common lamps of life—the lamps of hope, of faith, of love, of daily labor, of human service."

To come off victorious in the fight the Christian must put on the whole armor of God, all that God provides for his overcoming, there must be no part lacking. Verse 13 reiterates this counsel, and verses 14-18 specify what these helps are.

II. THE POWERS OF EVIL WITH WHICH THE CHRISTIAN HAS TO CONTEND, verse 12. It is not with a mere man that we have to contend, Paul asserts: our antagonists are principalities, powers, world-rulers of this darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. "All these are not figures of speech with Paul; they are real beings, true objective enemies of the human soul. It is hard for us to realize how far we have departed from that whole conception. Man's look then was turned outward, and all the universe was conceived as fighting for the possession of his soul. Man's look now is turned inward, and his soul is fighting with itself. There are different views of human life, the objective and the subjective views. No century has had its eye so earnestly fixed upon man's struggle with himself. No century has made so little of the thought of any evil spirits outside of us, trying to harm our souls. And we are all men of our century, and must look on truth from the side from which our time regards it, but yet we never ought to entirely forget its other sides, from which it has most powerfully appealed to other times. I am willing enough to talk after our modern way, to represent the struggle of man as a struggle with himself; but all the time I want to remember with St. Paul and all the great objective thinkers and believers, that the universe is large, that it is full of beings who must send forth influence upon each other, and so that, while the spiritual enemy with which I fight today meets me immediately

as a lust of my own soul, it has its sources and connections far back in the world of spiritual being which stretches far, far away past my sight, but not too far away to send forth forces from its farthest depths which shall touch and tell upon my life. We want to bear this in mind, and see that Paul's way of feeling and our modern way are really one. The underlying idea is the same—that he who tries to live a holy life is beset by a new kind of enemy, and lives in the midst of fears that he never felt before" (Phillips Brooks).

"Our enemy will use all his subtlety. His strategy is that of an experienced and resourceful general. The fighting will be at close quarters. You will come to grip with him who wills your destruction. Do not think that this is a mere figure of speech. Does anything ever cling to you like an idea? Have you ever to grapple with anything more clinging than a passion? See how anger, sloth, desire, pride, vanity, will grip you. Ideas, motives, passions, lurking in your soul, will slay you unless you arouse yourself to hard encounter. These come not singly but as hosts. They whip you off your feet, they throw you if you do not use all your wisdom, especially if you are not inspired and instructed by the Spirit of Christ. Let not the enemy take you unawares" (Dr. John Gardner).

III. THE WEAPONS WITH WHICH THE CHRISTIAN IS TO ARM HIMSELF, verses 13-18. "The days are evil," Paul has said in 5.16; now he counsels his readers to withstand "in the evil day" by taking up the whole armor of God. Paul refers to the whole earthly pilgrimage as an evil time that demands constant, vigilant fighting. We are more inclined to think of special days as evil crises that come upon us suddenly and unheralded. "Put on the complete armor of God so that you may be able to stand your ground on the day of battle, and, having fought to the end, to remain victors on the field": this is Dr. Weymouth's translation which Dr. Jowett declares "stirs one's blood," and regards as a very vital interpretation of the rousing, soldierly counsel of the apostle Paul.

Stand therefore! Stubborn, invincible resistance will win the battle. He that endureth to the end shall be saved, said Jesus. "The moral life of man is like the flight of a bird in the air. He is sustained by effort, and when he ceases to exert himself he falls" (J. A. Froude).

Before you take your stand you must arm yourself. You must put on the girdle of truth, for personal integrity is the foundation of character; "this plain grace of openness, truthfulness, reality, the mind that will practise no deceits and attempts no disguises in one's intercourse with God, is indeed vital to Christian safety and essential to the due operation of all the other qualities of character (Professor Salmond). And you must put on the breastplate of righteousness, that is, "straightforward, honest dealing—thinking and acting in a way that is absolutely just and honest."

"Even in the ordinary Oriental attire, the girdle was a necessity. Without the girdle the loose, flowing garments became cumbersome, flapping about the feet, and especially hindering the movements in a hostile wind. But the use of a girdle was still more imperative on the field of war. The belt bound the loose pieces of armor together, creating a healthy sense of firmness, compactness, and making the soldier feel that he had everything well in hand. The word 'breastplate' here is very inaccurate and misleading. The piece of armor to which the apostle refers protected the back as well as the breast, and in addition it gave protection to the neck and the hips. It would be much more truly described by the phrase 'a coat of mail,' because it was a sort of vest made of small metal plates, overlapping one another like shield upon shield, and protecting the vital organs, back and front, from every assault of the foe" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

And you must have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. "In the Roman Empire scrupulous care was given to the feet of the fighting men. The shoes were specially made, not only for long marches, but for protection against the secret dangers of the way. Multitudes of sharp sticks were inserted on the surface of the road, keen as dagger points, to obstruct the advance of an enemy, and to maim his soldiers and compel them to fall out by the way." Dr. F. B. Meyer beautifully expresses Paul's thought here in five words—Peace must wing our steps.

"A man will have a sure footing in the world, so that he can meet its manifold pitfalls and dangers, who has a peaceable will and intention, who goes forth with generous and kindly thoughts toward others. It is difficult for the deadly sins to get the mastery over a man whose attitude towards others is one of peace and generosity" (Dr. John Gardner).

In addition, you must take up the shield of faith, that is, a strong trust in God's protecting and saving grace, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. "Arrows were tipped with tow, pitch, or such like material, and set on fire before they were discharged. The shield was constructed of material (wood or leather) which not only prevented the missile from penetrating, but was proof against its fire and let it burn itself out" (Professor Salmond).

"We are prone to live in the body rather than in the soul, and therefore against bodily ills we seek our shields. We want a shield against sorrow, adversity, loss, pain; in a word, we want a shield to keep us comfortable, and because the shield of faith does not do it we are often stunned and confused. It is just here that our false emphasis leads us astray. The apostle Paul lived in character and sought a shield to make him holy. He did not seek such a shield to keep off ill-circumstances, but he sought a shield to keep ill-circumstances from doing him harm. To Paul the deadly rays in circumstances, whether the circumstances were bright or cloudy, were just those that consumed his spiritual susceptibilities and lessened his communion with God, the things that ate out his moral fiber, and that destroyed the wholeness of his human sympathies and impaired his intimacy with God and man. It was against these deadly rays that he needed a shield, and he found it in a shield of vital faith in Christ. The faith-life cultivates the personal fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

And take the helmet of salvation. Never forget that the Lord Jesus Christ loved you and died for you and that in his redemption you are saved from evil. And the last element of your equipment is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. "That which the Scriptures enshrine, that which our Master taught, that which the Spirit of God teaches all who are obedient, is our surest weapon of warfare. See how the Master used it in the wilderness! It is a trusty weapon. Learn to use it dexterously and mightily" (Dr. John Gardener).

"The Word describes the armor, and it directs us to the armory. The description would oppress me if the directions were absent. If I had to forge the armor for myself I should be in despair. But I can go to the armory of grace, where there is an ever-open door and abundant welcome for every person who fain would be a knight-errant of the Lord. The Lord will provide me with perfect equipment suitable for every kind of contest that may meet me along the road" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

And further, in order "to stand," Paul counsels one to pray at all seasons in the Spirit, and watch thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

The greatest thing anyone can do is to pray. Prayer is a better help than a coat of mail. By prayer the Christian soldier is kept in touch with the Great Commander, receiving from him directions and encouragement and strength. And the sincerest Christian prays not for himself alone but for the whole army of God. Oh, come, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker!

IV. THE PERSONAL NOTE, verses 19, 20. Dr. Moffatt translates the last three verses of our text thus: Praying at all times in the Spirit with all manner of prayer and entreaty—be alive to that, attend to it unceasingly, interceding on behalf of all the saints and on my behalf also, that I may be allowed to speak and open my lips in order to expound fully and freely that open secret of the gospel for the sake of which I am in custody as its envoy. Pray that I may have freedom to declare it as I should.

Paul was a prisoner at this time, but he did not ask his friends to pray that he be released. He thought more of the privilege of being Christ's ambassador than of the tyranny of being in chains. Everywhere and always Paul triumphed gloriously over material things. There is a message here for all who are under the restraint of untoward circumstances: let them think less of their misfortune and more of their opportunities and privileges.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Epistle to the Ephesians. This Epistle was written by Paul during his imprisonment at Rome. Although addressed especially to the Church at Ephesus, it may have been a circular letter designed for all the churches in the Roman Province of Asia.

The Invisible Antagonists against which the Ephesian Church had to Contend. The apostle is writing to a tiny company of Christians at Ephesus, so

tiny that they are like a drop in a bucket in the midst of that teaming population. They have cut themselves away from old fellowships. They have forfeited dear and vital friendships, and they are now living an alien life within the circle of their own city. Let us take a swift survey of the hostility of their surroundings. First of all, Ephesus was luxurious, she was carnal, and she was ennervated. This was the first of their antagonisms. Then, to mention a second antagonism, there was the majestic power of an alien religion. The magnificent Temple of Diana then dominated the city by its splendor, and represented a religion which held the people in the loose leash of easy and licentious morals. Just think of that resplendent temple, and then think of some obscure house in some obscure street, where this little company of Christians met to commune with their Lord, and in the contrast you will realize another of the antagonisms which assailed their discipleship every hour of the day. And then, to name a third of their antagonisms, there was the pervasive power of popular customs and traditions. This little company of Christians in Ephesus were defying popular social customs and popular religious customs every day, and they were, therefore, confronted with a fierce and terrific opposition. And so they had all these antagonisms to meet, the hardening glare of the world, the far-reaching power of an alien religion, and the tyranny of popular custom and tradition. And in the very thick of all these you must imagine these comparatively youthful Christians seeking to live their separate and consecrated life.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

In a lesson about conquering evil three things should be kept in mind. (1) It is not evil in general, but it is a specific evil—intemperance, selfishness, quarrelsomeness—whatever the special temptation is—which each individual must combat. (2) The way to conquer an evil tendency is not to dwell morbidly on it, but to foster its opposite. Remember Madame Swetzhine's words: "We often try in vain to dig up errors by the roots, to fight evil hand to hand on its own ground where it has us at a disadvantage, whereas our surest way to victory is by developing and fortifying the good that is in us. We have but a certain measure of strength and activity; as much of this as is added to the good is taken from the evil." (3) No one can conquer besetting sins in his own strength. It is in Christ's strength that one wins the victory.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE FIGHT AGAINST STRONG DRINK

Beginning the Lesson. "No more fighting, no more fighting!" were the words which Charles Kingsley uttered shortly before he died. For everyone as for him the Christian warfare is not over till death arrives. Paul was a valiant fighter all his life. He uses the metaphors of warfare frequently in his writings, but never more forcibly than in our text for today. (Continue with The Text Explained.)

The Defiance of Evil. It is not enough to defend ourselves from the assaults of evil; we must challenge and fight it at every step. We must deal with evil in an uncompromising spirit, allowing no truce, granting no quarter. It is an axiom with the military that a purely defensive war must end in defeat; and certainly we often fail in spiritual warfare because we do not press the battle to the gate, and thoroughly subjugate the enemy when God gives us his neck. We must deal with evil in the spirit of abounding courage and confidence. We must also struggle against evil in the full assurance of final victory. "When Immanuel," says John Bunyan, "had driven Diabolus and all his forces out of the City of Mansoul, Diabolus preferred a petition to Immanuel, that he might have only a small part of the city. When this was rejected, he begged to have only a little room within the walls; but Immanuel answered, 'He should have no place at all, no, not to rest the sole of his foot.'" To this end and in this confidence we must pursue the struggle. We often fail in defense because we are lacking in the spirit of defiance.—Dr. W. L. Watkinson, in The Duty of Imperial Thinking.

We Need Luther's Spirit in our Fight against Strong Drink. Luther's righteous anger was aroused over the great evil of his day, the iniquitous sale of indulgences, which assured credulous purchasers that they had thereby bought the forgiveness of their sins. "Whereupon," writes the historian, "*seeing that no man of greater might was willing to step forward and do battle for righteousness,* he drew up Ninety-five Propositions concerning the power of indulgences, and without con-

sulting any of his friends, affixed them to the door of the parish church of Wittenburg." In less than a month's time, these Ninety-five Theses were known throughout all Germany.

Charles V summoned Luther to appear before him and the Diet at Worms. Against Luther were arrayed the Emperor, the six Electors, all the sovereign princes and all the dignitaries of the church. Luther withstood them all. "It is neither safe nor right to go against conscience," he boldly declared, adding: *"Here I take my stand. I can do no otherwise. So help me God."*

Luther gained courage for this bold stand through prayer. Portions of his prayer on the night before the Diet of Worms, overheard by his friends, seem strangely imbued with the words of our text today. "O almighty and everlasting God, how strong is the world!" he cried. "How weak and shrinking is the flesh, and how mighty and busy is the devil through his apostles and the wise of this world! O thou, my God, stand by me against all the world's reason and wisdom. For thou must do it alone! It is not my cause but thine own. I would fain live out my days in quietness, without struggle and perplexity. But thine is the cause, O Lord, and it is righteous and eternal. Therefore stand by me, thou righteous and eternal God. O tell me, hast thou chosen me for this work? I know that thou hast. Then see thou to it, O God, for the name of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, who is my defense and shield, yea, my strong fortress."

There is some fight in every one of us. The question is, What should we fight for? For our own little rights? For our own selfish ends? Or for some great cause? Luther had a great cause. He took it up when he saw that there was "no man of greater might willing to step forward to do battle for righteousness."

In our fight against the liquor traffic has not part of the trouble been that most defenders of Prohibition have looked for mightier men to step forward and slay the evil? If there were enough men with the spirit of Luther, willing to work and depending upon God for strength in the fight, our land would soon become "bone dry."

Speak boldly in the Fight Against Evil. Paul begs the Ephesians to pray for him that he may open his mouth boldly. There is a vast difference between opening one's mouth boldly, and opening it timidly, apologetically, softly. It is one thing to speak in whispers, and a far different thing to put a trumpet to the lips and blow a blast which will stir to rage the whole hierarchy of evil-minded men. It is only the men who speak boldly who make a dent in the life of their generation. No man can lead who does not blow a trumpet. It comes upon us with a shock of surprise, this request of Paul for concerted prayer that he may speak boldly as he ought to speak. Was he sometimes tempted to speak guardedly, to hold back those truths most likely to give offense, to tone down those passages which were sure to provoke criticism or give rise to misunderstandings, to file off the edge of his rebukes and to reduce the heat of his condemnation of ideas which were erroneous and customs which were wrong? Of course he was. Even apostles are often tempted. The whole Church had to get on its knees to make Paul strong enough to open his mouth boldly.—Dr. C. E. Jefferson.

The Progress of the Fight against Strong Drink in America and throughout the World. As this book is printed more than a year before this lesson is studied, the latest temperance facts cannot be included. Pupils should be encouraged to consult at a Public Library The Reader's Guide and look up the recent magazine articles upon the subject there listed.

Fighting with All Prayer and Supplication, Praying at All Seasons in the Spirit. The river that runs slow and creeps by the banks, and begs leave of every turf to let it pass, is drawn into little hollownesses, and spends itself in smaller portions, and dies with diversion; but when it runs with vigorousness and a full stream, and breaks down every obstacle, making it even as its own brow, it stays not to be tempted by little avocations, and to creep into holes, but runs into the sea through full and useful channels. So is a man's prayer. If it moves upon the feet of an abated appetite, it wanders into the society of every trifling accident, and stays at the corners of the fancy, and talks with every object it meets, and cannot arrive at Heaven; but when it is carried upon the wings of passion and strong desires, a swift motion and a hungry appetite, it passes on through all the intermedial regions of clouds, and stays not till it dwells at the foot of the throne, where mercy sits, and thence sends holy showers of refreshment (Eph. VI. 18).—Jeremy Taylor.

For Discussion. 1. A man is the worse for drink long before he is drunk.

2. Do we as a class count it our duty to set ourselves against the evils of the world, especially the intemperance evil?

3. Fearless preaching such as Paul covets, verse 19.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Compare Paul's farewell address at Miletus with Samuel's farewell at Gigal. 2. What did Paul mean by saying "I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem"? 3. What was Paul's purpose in the world? 4. What is yours? 5. What new light does this scene throw upon the character of Paul?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
STRONG ARMOR FOR A HARD FIGHT

Beginning the Lesson. Down at the Cape of Good Hope a diver was at work far below the surface of the sea when a giant octopus suddenly seized his hand. At once the man signaled with his other hand to his helpers above and was immediately raised to the surface. What was their horror on seeing him emerge from the water almost completely enveloped in the slimy folds of the frightful devil-fish! They could dislodge the sea monster only by hewing it to pieces. What if the diver had not been encased in his panoply of brass! What that armor was to the diver in his conflict with the devil-fish, the armor of God of which Paul speaks in our lesson today is to the Christian in his conflict with evil.

"First, the girdle of truth,
There is no safety in a lie.
Second, the breastplate of righteousness.
The right life is the only safe life.
Third, the sandals of peace.
Peace has more victories than war.
Fourth, the shield of faith.
'I will trust and not be afraid.'
Fifth, the helmet of salvation.
The Christian life is the fearless life.
Sixth, the sword of the Spirit.
The true sword is the Word of God.
Seventh, the habit of prayer.
Prayer will always kill sin."

Put on the Whole Armor of God. From our earliest years we are brought under the power of temptation, though perhaps we don't think of it as temptation. Even young children know that there are some things they must not do, and yet we may sometimes see a power in them enticing them to do those forbidden things; and many a burn and many a cut they get as a consequence. This enticing power is what we mean by temptation; as the years pass this power becomes the stronger. In our early years our parents and teachers shield us from the consequences of temptation and warn us of it. In our later years we have to meet it for ourselves, and the sooner we learn to face it and to fight it, the better for us. St. Paul knew that it is as foolish to attempt to fight this battle, unless we are prepared and armed, as it is to attempt any other, and that is why he says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Upon an island near the coast of Sicily there lived the Sirens, as Homer tells us in his story of Ulysses. These Sirens had been banished to this island for something they had done, and part of their punishment was this: they were to perish immediately upon letting any one pass by their island who was not charmed by their song, and so drawn to destruction. You can imagine how alluringly they would sing, seeing that their lives depended on it; and many and many a sailor did they lure to shipwreck and to death by their song.

Ulysses was told of this and determined to put an end to their dreadful power. He knew the great risk he was running and so he prepared carefully for the severe temptation he was to endure. He took his sailors and carefully instructed them in his plans. They were to bind him fast to the mast of the ship so that he could not move; then they were to row him past the spot where the Sirens lived. If, when they came in sight and sound of the Sirens, he called to them to stay they were not to heed his words; if he made signs to them to alter their course they were not to obey him; they were to row with all their might till the island was safely passed. Having carefully given these instructions he took the precaution to fill the ears of his sailors with wax that they might not hear the alluring song; they then set out upon their perilous voyage.

As they drew near the island there were the Sirens waiting for them, and their sweet enticing song came over the waters. As Ulysses heard it he thought he had never listened to anything half so sweet before. His soul longed to stay and feast itself on the delicious music; longed even to go to them. He called to his sailors to stop their rowing; he made signs to be unbound from the mast, but they remembered what he had said, and heeding him not the sailors bent with greater energy to the oars and the ship flew on past the island, till the singing sounded fainter and fainter, and at last died away altogether. So was the influence of the Sirens broken, and no longer were men allured to shipwreck and to death by their singing.

Now this beautiful story makes two things clear; first, Ulysses knew that he was going right into the power of a great temptation; and secondly, he would not venture on it till he had taken the utmost precaution. And it was only by doing this that he saved himself and became the benefactor of his fellows. It teaches us very plainly that temptation is not to be entered into carelessly. It shows us that if we would overcome we must prepare for it very carefully and meet it very seriously.

The apostle is saying exactly the same things to us in our text: "Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." St. Paul knew a great deal about soldiers and about armor. He knew, as we learn from this same chapter, something about helmets and breastplates, and shields and swords, and he knew also that a man who was not armed with these stood a very poor chance in the battles of those times. Paul knew still more about the battle of life and the risks we run here. He knew that the Christian soldier stood a poor chance except he, too, was armed. So this passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians is his great call to us to arm that we may be prepared for temptation. He then gives us a list of our armor and our weapons; Righteousness is a breastplate; Faith is a shield; Salvation is a helmet; The Word of God is a sword, and so on. Those who wish to be fully prepared must be armed with these.

We cannot escape temptation, do what we will. It will come in many places and in many ways, and at most unexpected moments. It finds its way into school life and into home life. It comes in such simple forms that we hardly recognize it as temptation. It is not always something critical like a theft or a lie; perhaps it is only an impulse to deceive our teacher or parents; it may be a feeling of jealousy at another's success; or a spirit of wilfulness and disobedience. These are all matters to be met and conquered; and if we do not meet and conquer them in school and home life how can we expect to meet and conquer the more critical temptations which come with later years?

Further, we cannot hope to overcome temptation unless we are prepared for it. We are prepared for it principally by possessing the Spirit of Christ in our hearts. If we will not open our hearts to his Spirit or use the aids he gives us in his teaching and example, we are left to our own weak efforts and that so often means failure.

There is grace sufficient for every temptation. Those who day by day in prayer seek from Christ the strength he can impart, know that there is no temptation in all the world that they need fear. And moreover, instead of temptation spoiling and defeating their lives, they make it serve higher ends; for every temptation that is met and conquered leaves them stronger still, just as men grow stronger in body from constant exercise.—Condensed from The Shattered Temple, by John Eames.

The Oxygen Helmet. One day there was an explosion of gas in the Pocahontas Coal Mine in West Virginia. After three days some rescuers went down into the deadly gas that filled the mine and found a few men still alive. The next day the newspapers said, "The rescuers themselves would have perished except for the oxygen helmet that they wore."

Not one of us can live without the oxygen helmet. I hear you say: "That is not true of me, for I never go where there is any poisoned air." Don't you? Well, let us ask a few questions. Wasn't the air poisoned when that evil thought swooped down on you, and made you feel that you could scarcely breathe? Wasn't the air poisoned when the other boys used bad language and you thought it sounded big and manly? Wasn't the air poisoned when you thought you could escape some punishment by telling a small falsehood?

Yes, poisoned air is all about us! It is not possible to avoid it for many days together. Is there any way to breathe freely and safely?

Yes, the oxygen helmet is the way. Do I really mean it? Certainly I do! Look at Eph. 6.17—"Take the helmet of salvation." There it is! The oxygen helmet! It is the faith in Christ that comes down from above and brings us the clean, pure air of heaven in the midst of this lower poisoned air all around us. You can't

live without it; but with this helmet you will be as safe as the rescuers in the Pocahontas mine.

Take the helmet of salvation!—George Lawrence Parker, in The Congregationalist.

"I Came here to Fight." In France one day an American general was watching some soldiers who had come up to take their places in a regiment which needed new troops because so many of the ones it used to have had been lost in battle. He went up and spoke to one of them. He said, "Son, where did you come from?"

The boy remembered all the long march through the queer little towns of France, each one with its stone houses and its crooked streets, so much like every other one, and his face was puzzled. "General," he said, "I don't know where we came from."

The general thought he would tease him a little, so he said to him, "Well, where are you going?"

"General," said the boy, "I don't know where we are going."

"Well," said the general, trying to look astonished, "where are you now?"

The boy looked round at the little village with the French name which he could never pronounce, and shook his head. "General," he said, "I don't even know where I am at."

"Well," said the general, "what did you come over here for?"

At that the boy straightened up and a flash came into his eyes. "General," he said, "I came here to fight!"

The general threw back his head and laughed, delighted. The boy understood the one thing that counted. He knew what he was there for, and all his courage and strength were ready.

The war which took these boys to France is over, but is it not well for boys and girls at home to remember the war which is never over? We, also, are here to fight—to fight all things that are wrong and evil,—to be as the great apostle called the young Timothy, "good soldiers of Jesus Christ."—W. Russell Bowie, in The Armor of Youth.

For our Wrestling is against Principalities and Powers. Strong drink Shakespeare describes as the enemy that steals away the brains and the immortal part of man, leaving behind the bestial, and he apostrophizes it thus: "O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil!"

A British writer says that in the local police courts you hear pleading like this urged in mitigation of the sentence about to be pronounced on inhuman conduct: "My son is the best of sons; but with the drink the devil enters into him."

In the struggle between the missionary and the forces of evil in the foreign field, strong drink throws all its energies into the scale against the missionary. "You are the people who have given us missionaries," said Khama, "yet strong drink does and will hinder their work. I dread the white man's drink more than all the assegais of the Matabele. Its wounds never heal. To fight against drink is to fight against demons."

"Scores of casks of spirits!" sighed Mary Slessor as she boarded the Ethiopia for Old Calabar, "and only one missionary!" In time she discovered that this represented the chief article of trade among the people for whom she lived and labored, the other items consisting of guns and chains, the chains being considered necessary for limiting the liberty of those whom drink had maddened. When Mary Slessor denounced the sale of liquor at Old Town she was met with the question on the part of the natives, "What for white man bring their rum—suppose rum to be no good? He be God-man bring the rum—then what for God-man talk so?" And she was unable to make answer.

Sentence Sermons to Remember.

"Soldiers of Christ arise,
And put your armor on;
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through his eternal Son."

The Christian's armor will rust, unless it be furbished with the oil of prayer.—William Gurnall.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Where has Paul been between our lesson two weeks ago and this? 2. What does Paul say in Phil. 3.14 was always his goal? 3. What does he say in 2 Tim. 7.8 about his course? 4. What did Paul mean by the last clause of verse 26? 5. Have you found Christ's saying true?

PAUL'S FAREWELL AT MILETUS

GOLDEN TEXT: Ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20.35

LESSON Acts 20.1-38 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 126.1-6

REFERENCE MATERIAL John 14.27-31; Ephesians 1.15, 16; 2.1-13

ACTS 20.25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more. 26 Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God. 28 Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build *you* up, and to give *you* the inheritance among all them that are sanctified. 33 I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 34 Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35 In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, 38 sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. PAUL REVIEWS HIS MINISTRY AT EPHESUS, verses 18-21. See The Historical Background. From Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus to ask the elders of the church there to come to meet him. In the churches which he founded Paul had established the office of deacons and had ordained elders after the model of the Jewish synagogue. Peter in his Epistles calls himself a fellow-elder; and Paul calls these church officials sometimes elders and sometimes bishops, using the latter term, which means literally overseers, or superintendents, in churches where the Gentile element was large.

When the Ephesian elders arrived Paul began his talk by recalling to their minds his mode of life while among them. First of all he spoke of his "lowliness of mind." Humility was a remarkable virtue in Paul, for it was an uncommon one in his day. Fear of giving offense to the Jews and endangering his own life had not kept him from preaching a crucified Christ, the need for repentance and faith, and the gospel for Gentiles as well as Jews.

II. HE GLANCES AT THE FUTURE, verses 22-25. Paul's spirit was heavy, he felt as though he were in bonds; he was bound for Jerusalem, and he had a foreboding that evil things would befall him there. The Holy Spirit assured him that bonds and afflictions awaited him.

"As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the turf of the prairies,
Far in advance are closed the leaves of the shrinking mimosa,
So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad forebodings of evil,
Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke of doom has attained it" (Longfellow).

"If Paul could have looked toward later days, he might have seen with prophetic eyes the figure of John Huss as he journeyed to the great council at Constance in the fifteenth century. He might have seen the figure of Luther as he journeyed to Worms in the sixteenth century. He might have seen himself as one of a great host traveling with noble courage the way of danger in the name of Christ" (Dr. Lynn H. Hough).

Paul holds not his life of any account as dear unto himself, so that he may accomplish his course, and the ministry which he received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. "Accomplish my course" is a metaphor suggested by the Greek games, especially the foot-race. Paul does not say that he does not value his life; he says that he does not value his life *for himself.* He does not consider that his life was given to him alone, that it has worth only for what he himself can

"get out of it." He has a higher motive in living—"For me to live is Christ," he declares in his letter to the Philippians.

"How the world needs such people! Men who see by a fine instinct God's ruling upon every particular situation and go straight for it, asking no reward, distracted by no fear" (Dr. John A. Hutton).

III. HE IS CONSCIOUS OF DUTY FAITHFULLY DONE, verses 25-27. Paul seemed to have a presentiment that death was near at hand, for he told his friends that they should see his face no more, and for that reason he assured them that his conscience was clear ("I am pure from the blood of all men"); if they rejected the gospel, it was not because he had failed to proclaim it.

"Only a Paul could say this with fitness; we could not dare to say it" (Chrysostom). But we can have the consciousness of being true witnesses for Christ in the places of responsibility where God has placed us, as fathers and mothers, teachers and leaders of others.

IV. HE URGES THEM TO CARE FOR THE CHURCH, TO GUARD IT FROM HERESIES AND ENEMIES, verses 28-31. Paul now turns to those bishops, the overseers of the flock of God, and urges them to be faithful shepherds, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.

"We desire our life to be a life of noble service, of glad and happy labor for that which is highest and best. There is only one way to make it so, and that is to live it under the controlling power of the great price that has been paid for us" (Dr. Henry van Dyke).

Paul warned his hearers that enemies would come to make trouble, and that among themselves men would arise and seek to draw the disciples away from their faith. (The heretics Hymenæus and Alexander, 1 Tim. 1.20, and also Diotrephes, 3 Jn. 9, were presbyters of Ephesus.) They must be on their guard. Let them keep in mind how for three years he had not failed to admonish them with tears. "Paul sees so clearly the dire results of wrong living, and is so eager to save men, that when he exhorts them, and they refuse to heed his exhortation, he cannot hold back the tears" (Dr. C. E. Jefferson).

"Tears are indeed words—words of the heart."

Dr. J. H. Jowett, like Paul, possessed rare powers of sympathy, for which he paid a high price, literally wearing himself out in his ministry. He once said: "At first I could not conduct a funeral without tears. I could not read the Burial Service without my speech being choked; but now I have had so many funerals, I have seen so many people in sorrow, I have seen so much suffering, that I can read the Burial Service without tears. Well, perhaps this is part of the gracious providence of God that the burden should be eased, but I don't want the ease if it be at the cost of losing the compassion with my fellow-men. I would rather have the tears, I would prefer the choking speech, I would prefer that my not-too-strong body should be tired out, drained out twice or thrice a week, if I might only keep my compassion with my fellow-men."

V. HE COMMENDS THEM TO THE PROTECTION OF THE ALMIGHTY, verse 32. "And now," said Paul, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all that are sanctified."

It is always hard to say good-by to those with whom one has lived and worked and whom one has learned to love. If we were old Romans, Dr. Babcock tells us, who thought "Vale!" meant "Forever," we might well hesitate to speak the word, but "Good-by" for Christians, even if it should be for the last time on earth, is only the difference between "Good-night" and "Good-morning," and if it comes hesitatingly, one should stretch it out into the loveliest of wishes, "God be with you." This was Paul's way, he commended his friends and co-workers to God.

VI. HIS EXAMPLE WHILE WITH THEM, verses 31-35. During all his stay with them, he had coveted nothing, had taken no wage, but had supported himself and his companions by the labor of his own hands. In all things his life had been an example to them; by their labors they should help the weak.

It is a great thing to be able to refer to one's own life as an example for others to follow. It is a great thing to be able to say as did Roosevelt, "I am glad beyond measure that I am one of the many who have stood ready to

spend and be spent, pledged to fight while life lasts, the great fight for righteousness, and for brotherhood, and for the welfare of mankind."

Paul's last words were a reminder of what Jesus himself said, that It is more blessed to give than to receive. This saying of Christ is the only one recorded in the New Testament which is not also recorded in the Gospels.

"Half the world is on the wrong scent in pursuit of happiness. It thinks it consists in having and getting, and in being served by others. Happiness consists rather in giving, and in serving others" (Henry Drummond).

VII. THE PARTING ON THE SHORE, verses 36-38. When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt on the shore and prayed with them all. "In his letters, Paul is always kneeling down and praying. Over his letters and over the Book of Acts might appropriately be written the inscription, 'Behold he prays!' When he exhorted others to pray without ceasing he was only urging them to follow his own example" (Dr. Jefferson).

What wonder that they all wept at such a parting! They were grieved to the heart at his saying they should see his face no more. The leave-taking at the ship was difficult, and we can picture them standing on the shore and following the ship with their eyes till it was a mere speck on the horizon.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When and where did Paul first set foot in the Province of Asia? When had he first visited Ephesus? How long did he labor there on his next arrival?

Bound for Jerusalem. About a year has passed since the riot of Ephesus, the subject of our lesson last week. The outbreak ended Paul's labors in that city. He went first to Troas (2 Cor. 2.12), and then to Philippi, where Titus joined him and brought good news from the Church at Corinth. Several months were spent in "these parts"—Philippi, Thessalonica, Berœa. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written from Macedonia. Paul went on to Greece and during his three months' sojourn at Corinth wrote his Epistle to the Romans.

With the money he had collected for the poor in Jerusalem, Paul then began his journey to that city. He intended sailing from Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, directly to Syria, but learning of a plot the Jews had made against his life, he changed his plans and went back by the way he had come through Macedonia. The longer route made it impossible for Paul to reach Jerusalem in time for the Passover, as he had hoped to do; and he now aimed to arrive there at Pentecost, fifty days later. This gave him time to stop at Philippi. Luke is now with him, for the *we* appears again in the text. Paul sailed from Neapolis, the port of Philippi, for Troas, where the other delegates to Jerusalem were awaiting him, and there spent a week.

On the last night of his stay in Troas, Paul preached to the disciples in a room on the third story of a house. There were many lights burning, and the room was crowded and hot. At midnight a lad named Eutychus was overcome by sleep, and from the window where he was seated fell to the pavement below. He was taken up as dead, and great was the excitement and sorrow. But Paul rushed down and embraced him, and told the people that he would live. After sharing in the Lord's Supper, Paul talked on till morning came, when friends brought the lad alive and there was great rejoicing.

Paul's companions took ship from Troas, sailing around the promontory to Assos, whither Paul went by land and joined them. Their ship stopped for the night, when the wind fell, at Mitylene, a point opposite Chios, and again opposite Samos, and in a few days reached Miletus. Paul had passed by Ephesus, for he had not time to visit the church there, but at Miletus he sent for the elders of that church to come and meet him.

Miletus was at this time a seaport of Caria, the most important and most famous of the Ionian colonies. Its site is now ten miles inland. From Ephesus to Miletus was a distance of thirty miles by sea, twenty by the direct land route.

For the Blackboard. To your record of the Third Missionary Journey add: Troas, Macedonia, Illyricum, Corinth, Troas, Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Trogyllium, Miletus.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Profit was Paul's standard in teaching. He shrank not from declaring unto the Ephesians "anything that was profitable." This should be our attitude in regard to

truths discussed in class, whether they refer to questions of "higher criticism" or to modern problems. What kind of truths are profitable for your class?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCH MEMBERS

Beginning the Lesson. You remember how Samuel assembled the people at Gilgal where Saul was made king, and then in a solemn address called them to witness that his administration had been wholly just and honorable, and, in words that showed his deep love and interest in their welfare, warned and exhorted them, urging them to fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all their heart. There are many points of resemblance between that farewell speech of Samuel at Gilgal and Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian elders at Miletus.

Like Samuel, Paul wished the elders to cherish a just and affectionate recollection of his ministry, and he called them to witness that his life among them had been true, an example worthy of their imitation. Like Samuel, he wished to impress on the people the responsibility which henceforth was to be theirs, and he warned them of the dangers that awaited them, from within and without, and, exhorting them to take heed unto themselves, he commended them to God—they needed only to fear and serve him and all would be well. There is a pathetic side to this last scene that was not at Gilgal, for it is Paul's farewell, and the people assembled at the seaside sorrow most of all for this that he has told them, that they shall see his face no more.

Paul Reviews his Ministry. A sort of noble pride runs through Paul's retrospect of his ministry at Ephesus, born of the consciousness of duty faithfully done. What a joy it is when we come to give an account of any stewardship intrusted to us, to be able to give that account with joy and not with grief!

His retrospect gives us a beautiful picture of what an ideal ministry is like. It was an earnest ministry. It was no pastime for him; it was a serious and solemn business. He agonized even to tears for the souls of men. It was a faithful ministry. He declared the whole counsel of God. He kept back nothing that was profitable. And therefore he could proudly declare that he was pure from the blood of all men. The man who slurs over the solemn warnings of the gospel is not dealing fairly with men's souls. Paul was not only the preacher, he was also the pastor. He not only taught the crowds in public, but he taught also from house to house. This individual dealing is the most difficult, but at the same time the most rewarding part of a minister's duty. But it is not the minister's duty alone. People who cannot preach can speak the personal word. It was a blameless ministry. To avoid even the suspicion of making the gospel a way of gain, Paul throughout his sojourn in Ephesus supported himself by his own labor. It was an evangelical ministry. The theme of it was "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."—Condensed from a Sermon by Dr. J. D. Jones.

A Contrast to Paul's Retrospect.

O Life, thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
To wretches such as I!
Dim, backward as I cast my view
What sick'ning scenes appear!
What sorrows yet may pierce me through
Too justly I may fear:
Still caring, despairing,
Must be my bitter doom;
My woes here shall close ne'er
But with the closing tomb.—Robert Burns.

Life Means Opportunity for Service. The prophets used to call the service of the Lord a "burden." It was an awful weight upon them which they would have gladly laid down if the Lord had permitted. Never once does the apostle use that word "burden." It is not something that he carries. It is something that lifts him up, gives lightness to his feet, expansion to his heart, magnifies him in his own eyes. He always speaks of the mercy and love which have called him to serve, the condescension which has stooped to use him, the infinite grace which has intrusted the divine treasure to such a poor earthen vessel. "I thank God that he counted me worthy, putting me into the ministry." "Unto me, who am less than the least of

all saints, was this grace given." Never does he speak of it as a hardship, only to be endured for the sake of what will follow; never as a toiling and weary workman thinks of his labor—something to be got through with a view to the wages. Only very occasionally does he refer to the rewards, the heavenly rest, and the crown of righteousness which will be given him at the end. The service itself is a great and almost sufficient reward. To have been chosen for this thing, appointed to it by the King's command, to be a vessel in the hand of the Almighty, bearing witness of his grace and sharing with Christ the glory of serving—that is the grand thing. "None of these things move me, in view of the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus."

Whatever your work for Christ, whatever the sphere in which you have to sustain the Christian character, whether your duty is to be done in school, mission, home, workshop or sanctuary, whether you glorify his name in some prominent and public capacity or simply bear witness for him in obscure ways and private places, you have been put into what St. Paul calls "the ministry." It is the ministry which you have received of the Lord Jesus. Do you regard it as St. Paul did?—J. G. Greenhough, in The Mind of Christ in St. Paul.

A Responsibility of Church Members. Paul was not content with a public proclamation of the gospel. He taught privately from house to house. The intimate, personal relation of the teaching following the forceful, public presentation of the preacher, made the seizure of the truth upon the individual life a powerful thing.

The "house to house" presentation of the gospel is a matter in which every church member can have a share. In fact, whether we plan it or not, we are all teachers in the intimate contacts of our daily life. Out from us there goes an incentive toward God or a subtle poison of selfishness and indulgence. From house to house we are carrying all unconsciously a message which for good or evil changes the lives of men.—Dr. Lynn H. Hough.

An Important duty of Church Members. I think the Church of God ought to sound a more optimistic note. We have the unsearchable riches of the grace of God. We have the same grace with which the apostle Paul confronted Ephesus, and in the power of that grace we can meet the needs of London and New York and Calcutta and Pekin. And that grace is all-sufficient, and it is our privilege to carry the message and exemplify the power. His grace is all-sufficient! We are by no means the first people to face the difficult road, and the children of faith have always been the most justified in their most audacious ventures.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

The Church Ought to Help the Weak. No other organizations are so large and powerful. None can compare with the Church when it comes to membership or wealth or power. The big men and women of the United States are church members. It is the exception to find a man or a woman of power, intelligence and influence who is not also a church member. The people who have made the United States and who are making it today are church people.

Hand in hand with the Church has gone the press. Every denomination has at least one paper. The larger ones have scores of them. By means of the printed page the religious message is carried into most of our homes. Thus the Church has a tremendous power in moulding public opinion. Papers, books, pamphlets, propaganda material of all kinds, pour from these church presses into all parts of the land.

Anything which the church people of the United States seriously wish to do or to have can be theirs. If the church people of the United States really get together and act together, they can put through Congress any laws they desire; they can bring to pass in any community, or in the State or nation any measure that they are willing to back.

The most recent example of this is the case of the Prohibition Amendment. Forty years ago the early Prohibitionists were set down as narrow-minded fanatics, obsessed with a single idea. Little by little the work these early fanatics started has progressed, until we now have Prohibition incorporated in the Constitution of the United States. No one who knows anything about the circumstances of the Volstead Act has any doubt that the influence of the churches was the most important factor in securing the passage of this Act.—Condensed from New Tasks for Old Churches, by Roger W. Babson.

The Grace of Stewardship. We are likely to deceive ourselves as to the generosity of our giving if we do not know how much (or how little) we give in the course of a year. Dr. Jowett declared that the people who do not know how much they give always give less than they think they do. "There must be method in the

enterprise. There must be some designed strategy if we are to overcome the deadly attacks of the grim army of selfishness and meanness. And I am sure that part of this same method must be the assignment of a certain minimum proportion of our income to the ministries of beneficence. The minimum must not be less than one-tenth. But I would advise young people not to dribble their tenth away in small contributions. Let them go in sometimes for the giving of large sums. If you have ten pounds a year to give away, have the satisfaction now and again of giving a five-pound note to something. If you do it you will know the reason of the counsel. It seems a big sum, and it challenges your powers, and there is a bracing influence in the endeavor. It is like a fine drive at golf; it is a good send-off, and the lesser strokes will come in its train.

"It is better to give than to receive," said Jesus. There is greater happiness in the giving. How will you learn to like giving? A man in New York who is noted for his generosity tells his experience. "I am by nature extremely avaricious. But when I was a young man I had sense enough to see how mean and belittling such a position was, and I forced myself to give. At first, I declare to you, it was a torture to part with a penny; but I persisted, until the habit of liberality was formed. There is no yoke like that of habit. Now I like to give."

For Discussion. 1. Paul's lovableness. See Chapter XXV of Dr. Jefferson's The Character of Paul.

2. Paul's friendships. See Chapter XVII of Dr. Hugh Black's The Gift of Influence.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What was the motive of the elders in the proposal they made to Paul, and what was his motive in yielding to them? 2. Is there ever an excuse for mob action? 3. Is lynching diminishing in our land?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
AN EXAMPLE OF FAITHFULNESS

Beginning the Lesson. Paul's last journey to Jerusalem recalls at many points Christ's last journey there to meet his crucifixion. Both knew that they were facing the gravest peril, and both were certain that go they must. But there was this difference. The friends of Jesus were blind to his approaching death, but the friends of Paul fully realized his danger and everywhere sought to dissuade him from going to meet it.

When Stanley found Livingstone in the heart of Africa he begged him to return home. Livingstone was old and feeble; he was destitute of men and means to enable him to make practical progress. But, like Paul, none of these things moved him. "No, no," he said to Stanley, "to be knighted by the Queen and welcomed by thousands of admirers would be pleasant, but it is impossible. It must not be. I must finish my task." Paul was determined to finish his task.

Steadfast of Purpose, Despite Discouragers. One would think that Paul might rest now. He has had a hard life. He has done a great work. He is growing old. The time of youthful enthusiasm ought to be over for him. But some men never grow old at heart. To Paul all that he has accomplished seems only a beginning.

Now in this month of February, 58, he is starting from Corinth on the beginning of that expedition. Young Timothy is with him, and Luke and Trophimus the Ephesian and four other delegates from the churches of Asia, probably bringing with them the moneys collected in their towns.

First to Jerusalem. He wants to get there in time for the Passover. It is not easy to get a passage just now, for all over the land the caravans are on the march, the Passover pilgrims are assembling. Down at the harbor he finds quite a crowd of them already waiting for a ship.

And soon he finds that it is an ugly crowd and dangerous. Black looks and muttered curses greet him as he comes. There is no time when a fanatic crowd is so excited and inflamed as just before a religious festival, and if Paul had been a wiser man he would have chosen some other port than that of Corinth, where he was so well known and so well hated by the Jews. They are already pointing him out, the renegade who speaks blasphemous words against Moses and the Law. They are biding their time. A crowded ship on a dark night is a capital place to knife a man or hustle him overboard. Paul's friends get wind of the treacherous plot, so they decide to start overland through Macedonia.

And there is no chance now of being in Jerusalem for the Passover. However, it is a pleasant journey with pleasant friends, in the beautiful springtime just before Whitsuntide, and it takes them through towns where dear old friends will meet them. I think Paul got sick with his chronic disease when they came to Philippi, for I find that he and the physician Luke had to stay there while their party passed on to Troas. If so, it was not a bad place to fall sick, amid the best beloved of his converts, Lydia and the jailer and all the rest of them.

He and Luke left Philippi and five days later caught up their friends at Troas, that classic ground by the plains of Troy from which he had started last year on this European trip. Here they had all to wait for a ship till Monday the 18th. This gave them a Sunday in Troas.

After their Communion service together, Paul sees his comrades on board and starts off alone on a twenty-mile walk to catch them up at the next port. He wants a long walk. He wants a rest from people for the present. He wants to be alone for quiet thought and communion with God. There is much to think about. The events of the last few weeks have shaken his confidence. Forebodings are in his heart that his great expedition to Spain is falling through. Somehow he feels that the brightest days of his ministry are probably over, and that the future holds hard times for him. Down the cemetery road, past the hot springs of Troas, through the oak woods, he wends his way, deep in thought all day, and at night catches up the ship at Assos.

On an evening ten days later we pick up his party again as they enter the harbor at Miletus. The ship had passed Ephesus without stopping, but there was time at Miletus to send a messenger to summon at least the presbyters of Ephesus to meet him. Next day they arrive at Miletus and here we get another of the graphic pictures in Luke's diary.

There is the ship unloading her cargo, the sailors shouting and singing at their work. Out on the sands a sad little group of clergy gathered to say good-bye to their master and friends. Paul is speaking. (What does he say? How does he part from his friends?)

Another week of delightful sailing in those sunny April days past Cos and Rhodes on its island of roses, on to Patara, where they change ship for Palestine. The third day he can see from the deck the highlands of Cyprus open up before him—Cyprus, the home of his old friend, Barnabas, now with his Lord in the spirit land. "Ah, Barnabas, I wish I had been less impatient with you that day at Antioch!"

They spend a week in Tyre, famous in Jewish prophecy. There the brethren warn him of the danger in Jerusalem, and there is repeated the scene at Miletus. "They all with their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and kneeling down on the beach we prayed together and said good-by."

Now they are in beautiful Cæsarea, the capital and seat of government—only three days from Jerusalem. There are fourteen days to spare before Pentecost, and it is pleasanter to spend them here with friends than in Jerusalem, where his reception is more doubtful. Paul is the guest of Philip the evangelist, a man after his own heart, with his own broad views. We remember when Philip was ordained one of the Seven Deacons—when he dared to preach the gospel to the heretic Samaritans —when he baptized the black eunuch of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, and, leaving him, preached from town to town till he came to Cæsarea. That was twenty years ago, and here he is in Cæsarea still with his four daughters.

What memories he would bring back to Paul as they sit together in the evenings talking over old times—that day when they had been present at the stoning of Stephen; the time when Paul had chased him and his comrades from Jerusalem, and how their loving Lord from the heavens had overruled all for good; how Paul's pursuit of the disciples had spread the gospel more widely; how Philip, far away from the narrowing influences of Jerusalem, was more in touch with Paul's wide views than were the Christians at headquarters.

And as they talked, young Luke was surely listening and making voluminous notes for his book. It was good for Paul to get these restful days in Cæsarea, the last he should have of such restful days for many a year to come. Even these were broken by warnings of coming dangers, and friends weeping and beseeching him not to go on. But Paul's purpose was fixed. He saw where duty lay. Like his Master before him amid similar warnings, "he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."—Condensed from The Story of Paul's Life by J. Paterson-Smyth.

It is More Blessed to Give than to Receive. You ought to give to Missions all that you can and to say every time you make an offering: "It is more blessed

to be a Christian child and to give to the cause of Missions that the gospel may be preached everywhere than it is to be a heathen child and have to receive the gospel from others who seem to be so slow in giving it."

Every time you give an offering for the orphans you ought to think: "It is more blessed to live in a happy home with father and mother and to give help to those who have no father and mother, than it is to be a poor orphan and to receive what other people feel like giving."

In the same way I would like to tell you about the poor, the sick, the crippled, the blind, the deaf and dumb, and the wicked, and to show that it is more blessed to give to these people and to help them than it is to be one of them and to have to receive help, but you can think these all out for yourselves. I want to use the remaining space for a beautiful story.

It is said that the Princess Eugenia of Sweden spent her summers on the island of Gothland, where she spent a great deal of her time visiting among the poor. While doing this she became interested in a number of poor women who were suffering from complaints which could not be cured. After a while she thought how nice it would be to have a hospital home for these poor women.

She was already helping so many people that all the money she could spare from her income was spent, and it would take a good deal of money for a hospital. At last she made up her mind to sell her diamonds and to use the money to build a hospital.

She received many thousands of dollars for them, and soon the hospital was built and filled with poor sick women.

One day, as she visited the hospital, she came to the bed of a poor old woman who was ready to die. She said to the princess, "I thank God that the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin—and that he has cleansed mine." As she said this the tears were running fast down her cheeks. They were tears of gladness, which told of the thankfulness she felt to Jesus for his love.

The princess said afterwards, "In those tears I saw my diamonds again." And she believed with all her heart the words of Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."—Thomas W. Dickert, in Sermons for Juniors.

Missionary Giving in which All May Have a Share. You all know that the World's Sunday School Association is a missionary organization which is doing a great work in establishing and helping Sunday-schools in foreign lands. You know, too, that the "Surplus Material Department" of this Association is doing a great work in securing for these foreign Sunday-schools a host of things which they need—the large, quarterly picture rolls, picture cards, illustrated religious papers, Bible scenes and scenes typical of America, maps of Bible lands, hymn books, stereopticons and slides, talking machines and records, organs, etc.

Every Intermediate and Senior class in our land should have a share in this most useful missionary work.

Let things you have and need not
Serve those who need and have not.

But do not be content with merely sending things you have and can spare. Spend your money for the girls and boys in Japan, Korea, China, India, the Philippines and elsewhere who are not so fortunately situated as are you.

You can obtain full directions of what to send and how and where to send it, by writing to the Superintendent of the Surplus Department, Rev. Samuel D. Price, D.D., 216 Metropolitan Tower, New York City. In your letter state your denomination and you will be given an address of a missionary in that denomination who needs your help. Enclose a stamp for reply.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. The true end of life is simply to do God's will.—Henry Drummond.

Pay as little attention to discouragements as possible; plow ahead as a steamer does, rough or smooth, rain or shine.—Dr. M. D. Babcock.

Don't wait till you have churned to give God the buttermilk.—Thomas Champness.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. How many times on his way to Jerusalem was Paul warned not to go there? 2. What reasons are given in Acts 20.22-24 for Paul's persistence in going in spite of warnings? 3. How was Paul received at Jerusalem? 4. Why was Paul found in the temple? 5. What led the Jews from Asia to make their charge against him? 6. Do you ever jump at wrong conclusions? 7. What was the result of the mob's violence?

PAUL'S ARREST IN JERUSALEM

GOLDEN TEXT: If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed. 1 Peter 4.16

LESSON Acts 21.17 to 22.30 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 125.1-5

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 5.10-12; 23.37, 38

ACTS 21.27 And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude and laid hands on him, 28 crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place. 29 For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. 30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut. 31 And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. 32 And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, left off beating Paul. 33 Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done. 34 And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd: and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into the castle. 35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the crowd; 36 for the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he saith unto the chief captain, May I say something unto thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek? 38 Art thou not then the Egyptian, who before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins? 39 But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

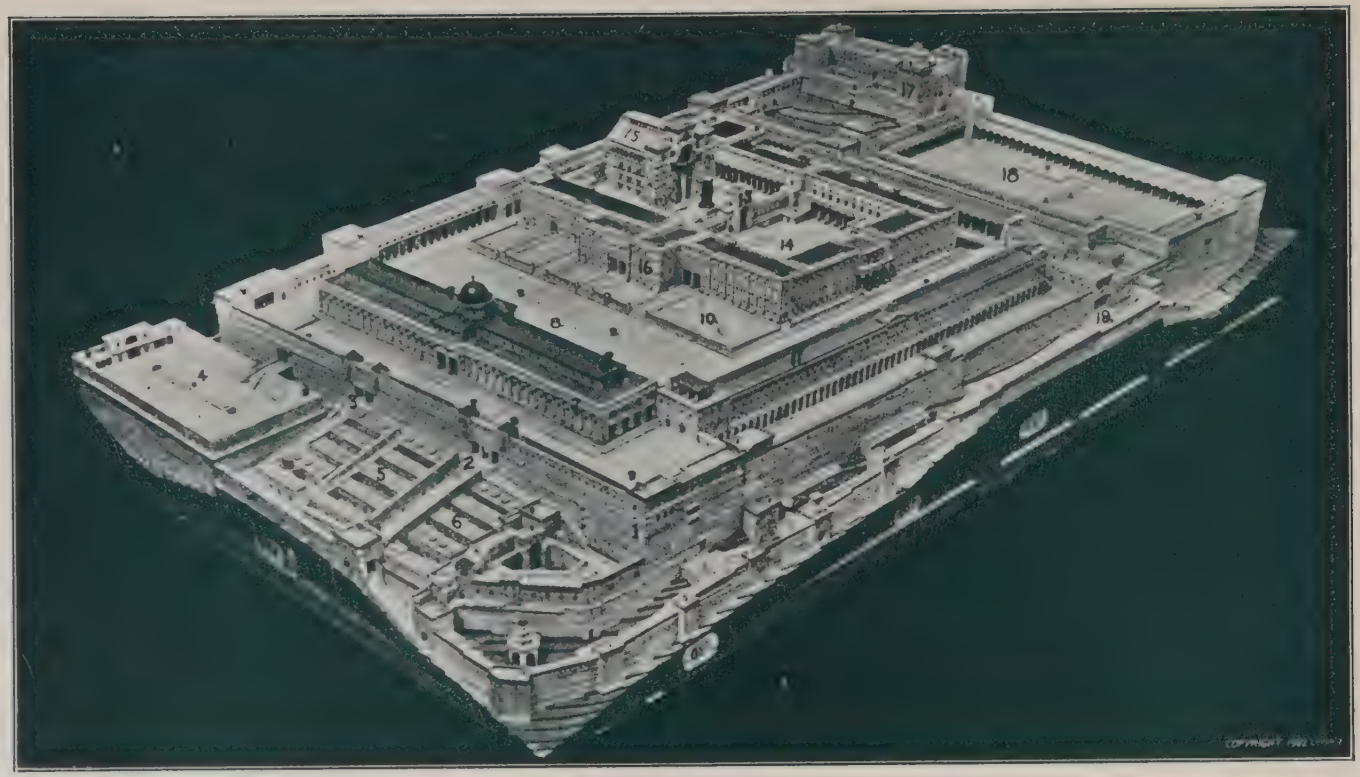
I. PAUL'S REPORT TO THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM, verses 17-19. Paul came to Jerusalem with a wonderful story of how the gospel message had been received among the Grecian Jews and Gentiles, and with abundant proof of their regard for the mother church, in the collection which they had contributed out of their deep poverty. The leaders of the church at Jerusalem received Paul cordially, and after his recital they glorified God. Luke's account, however, makes no mention of their gratitude for the help of the Gentile Christians. Apparently they passed at once to what was uppermost in their own minds.

The least that one can do to show that he is grateful is to say so. Gratitude is one of the cardinal virtues. We should be scrupulously careful to thank everyone who does anything for us, but, on the other hand, we should be as scrupulously indifferent when those for whom we do anything fail to thank us. Giving one's services on any other basis would be a miserable affair. "It is another's fault if he be ungrateful; but it is mine if I do not give," declared Seneca.

II. PAUL'S CONCESSION FOR THE SAKE OF THE HEBREW CHRISTIANS, verses 20-26. "You see, brother Paul," the elders said, "what great numbers of Jews here have become followers of the Way, and they are all zealous for the scrupulous keeping of the law." To those Hebrew Christians Paul's wonderful missionary success would be of little moment compared with the question whether Paul himself kept every jot and title of the ancient law.

A somewhat similar spirit reigned among the representatives of the Church of England in Africa a few years since. Missionaries were eager to tell of their labors and successes, but these High Churchmen said, "Brothers, we hear that you have received at your Communion table missionaries who do not belong to our sect."

"These new converts will hear of your coming, Paul, and will regard you with suspicion," continued the brethren, "for they have been told that you teach the Jews to forsake the laws of Moses and the customs of our fathers." Then they asked Paul to make a concession which, they thought, would win over his critics. Let him pay the charges for four men who had made a Nazarite vow and purify himself with them, that all might see that he observed the law. This proposal



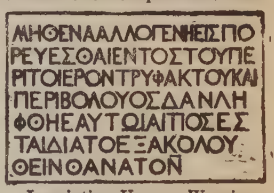
THE TEMPLE AT THE TIME OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL

The temple and its courts occupied a plateau formed by building a wall (Fig. 1) around the summit of Mt. Moriah. The parts were as follows: 7, Herod's Porch; 8, the Gentile Court; 9, Wall of Partition (Ephesians 2:14), no Gentile could go beyond this point; 10, Court of Israel. Jesus drove the dove-hawkers from 10 to 8; 11, Solomon's Porch; 12, the Gate Beautiful; here Peter and John found the lame beggar and here Paul was arrested and taken to 17, the Tower of Antonio; 14, Court of the Women and Treasury; 13, the Gate Nicanor; 15, the central structure which contained the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The Hall of Judgment and the King's Palace occupied the position of 5, 6 and 7.

seemed to Paul, to paraphrase one of his own statements, only the becoming a Jew to the Jews that he might gain the Jews. The proposal involved no matter of principle, and he consented. The expenses of the sacrifices for the young men were considerable, consisting for each of them a lamb for a burnt-offering, a lamb for a sin-offering, a ram for a peace-offering, and also meat-offerings and drink-offerings. Num. 6.14, 15.

"Paul would not have been willing to go through the process of ceremonial purification if that had been interpreted as essential to salvation. He was perfectly willing to do it as a concession to Jewish feeling and as an expression of his own loyalty to Jewish ways. The whole question of the practical strategies of a Christian is one of extreme difficulty. It is so easy for concession to become compromise. It is so easy for toleration to extend its borders until the man who is tolerant of the views of others becomes the man who has lost definite loyalty to any views of his own. On the other hand, the man who allows nothing for the prejudices of others and for sincere differences of opinion, comes to live a life of hard and selfish rigidity which can hardly be called an expression of the spirit of Christ. Paul found the true though difficult path. He was ready to fight like a soldier in a charge about essentials. He was ready to make hearty and friendly concessions about incidentals" (Dr. Lynn H. Hough).

III. PAUL IS MOBBED IN THE TEMPLE, verses 27-32. The scheme of the elders did not turn out as expected, because Jews from Asia, Paul's old enemies, stirred up a riot. It was Pentecost, and Jews from over all the world were in Jerusalem. These men from Asia seized Paul and cried out: "Men of Israel, help: this is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people and the law, and this place." "Moreover," they added, "he brought Greeks into the temple and hath defiled this holy place." By the *temple,* they meant the inner court, the Court of the Israelites, into which no Gentile might enter. This court was approached by a flight of forty-five steps, at whose foot was a stone fence to which notices were attached with the prohibition and death penalty for infringing inscribed on them in Greek and Latin. Here is a reproduction of the inscription upon a slab which was found in 1871 built into the walls of a small mosque in the Via Dolorosa. It came from the temple and the eyes of Paul may have rested often upon it. This is the translation: "Let no Gentile enter inside of the barrier and the fence around the sanctuary. Anyone trespassing will bring death upon himself as a penalty." Today no Jew is allowed to set foot on the temple area.



Inscription Upon a Warning Tablet

"Noble teaching would have left the mob as stolid as it found them; but an appeal to the narrow prejudices which they thought were religion was a spark in gun powder, and an explosion was immediate. It is always easier to rouse men to fight for their 'religion' than to live by it. The yelling crowd did not stop to have the charges proved. That they were made was enough. In Scotland people used to talk of 'Jeddart justice,' which consisted in hanging a man first, and trying him leisurely afterwards" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

The foundation for the charge made against Paul was that they had seen him in the temple with the Jews for whose vows he was paying, and had jumped to the conclusion (or made up the accusation) that they were Greeks, because they had seen him earlier on the streets of Jerusalem with a Greek, Trophimus the Ephesian, no doubt one of the custodians of the collection brought for the poor of Jerusalem.

This is the way many evil stories start. A suspicion is aroused, a supposition is formulated, and finally a certainty is stated. Somebody suspects some one of not being honorable or just or honest, he supposes that he is guilty of this or that wrong doing, and then he tells his supposition to a third person as a fact. If we find that we are given to drawing hasty conclusions on insufficient evidence in regard to the actions or motives of others, let us put a watch upon ourselves at this danger point.

"How little do they see what is, who frame
Their hasty judgment upon what but seems,"

All the city was moved; the mob dragged Paul out of the temple enclosure that its sacred precincts might not be polluted by his blood, and the temple guard hastily shut the gates between the courts.

"People are like sheep; if one sheep starts in a certain way, all the rest will follow."

IV. PAUL IS SAVED FROM DEATH BY THE CHIEF CAPTAIN, verses 31-36. Up to the Tower of Antonia tidings came to Claudius Lysias, chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. With soldiers and centurions he ran down the stairs, and his timely intervention saved Paul's life, who was being savagely beaten and soon would have been killed.

Soldiers of a Roman Legion
From the Arch of Constantine

Lysias ordered Paul bound with chains till he could investigate the trouble. "Who is he? What has he done?" he demanded, but could learn nothing from the shouts of the mob. Lysias then ordered Paul brought into the tower, but such was the frenzy of the mob who were shouting, "Away with him!" that the soldiers had to hold him aloft beyond their reach.

"Clearly the bulk of the crowd could not answer either of the questions of Lysias, though they could all bellow 'Away with him!' till their throats were sore. It is a perfect picture of a mob, which is always ferocious and volubly explanatory in proportion to its ignorance" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

V. PAUL'S REQUEST, verses 37-39. "May I say something unto thee?" courteously Paul asked. He spoke in the Greek language, and in surprise Lysias questioned, "Dost thou know Greek?" And then Lysias, in his turn, jumped to a conclusion, and continued, "Art thou not then the Egyptian who before these days stirred up sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins?" This Egyptian was the latest of the inciters to revolution in Jerusalem. Josephus in his Jewish Wars says that he led a rabble out of Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives, promising to show them that the walls would fall down at his command. The Assassins, or Sicarii, Dagger Men, were members of a secret society. A large number of them were killed or captured by the Procurator Felix, but their leader, the Egyptian, apparently had made his escape.

Lysias learned that his prisoner, instead of being a fanatical resurrectionist of Judea, was not a native of Palestine, but "a citizen of no mean city," Tarsus in Cilicia, a cultured Grecian Jew. Perhaps it was his surprise which led him to grant Paul's most unusual request that he might speak to the people.

VI. PAUL'S ADDRESS, 22.1-21. Then Paul, torn and bleeding as he was, and chained to two soldiers, stood upon the stairway above that howling mob who were thirsting for his blood, himself perhaps the only calm man there, and addressed them in their own language, Aramaic, a dialect of the Hebrew. He defended himself from the charge that he was an enemy of the people, of the law, and of the temple. He told them that he was an Israelite and though born in Tarsus he had been educated in Jerusalem, at the feet of their famous rabbi Gamaliel. He had been most zealous in persecuting the Christians, had even started for Damascus with letters from the Sanhedrin allowing him to seize and bring back in chains all the Christians he could find. Many of those to whom he was speaking must have known and recalled these facts. Next, he wished to defend his Christian faith, and he told them about his wonderful conversion, about his interview with Ananias and the restoration of his sight, and about his return to Jerusalem and his baptism. If the Crucified Jesus had appeared to him in such power, then he must be the Messiah whom he as a Pharisee had so longed to see, and if the Risen Jesus is really the Messiah, then Paul must, as a righteous Israelite, yield him willing obedience and bear his witness for him.

"More powerful than all argument is the experience of one man, arrested by Christ, and changed by that experience" (Dr. G. Campbell Morgan).

Yet another aim had Paul, the aim of all his preaching; he would win even that mob over to a favorable opinion of this Jesus who could change in a moment of time a bigoted Pharisee into an active Christian. And finally, he justified his work among the Gentiles as the fulfilling of the express command of his Lord.

VII. THE MOB CLAMORS FOR PAUL'S DEATH, verses 22, 23. At Paul's mention of the Gentiles, the mob yelled, "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live." They tore their garments, and clutching dust in their hands tossed it up in the air as Shimei had done when he cursed David. What a picture of frenzied hate!

"The test of conviction is the temper it produces. Frenzy in defense is always a condemnation of the thing defended. That is a great principle. Test it by all these New Testament pictures, and it will be found that those who were set for the defense of the gospel were always quiet, calm, sure, never possessed by panic, never descending to anything in the nature of unfairness or abuse of those from whom they differed. It is a lie that demands frenzy in defence, even though the frenzied man may not know that it is a lie" (Dr. G. Campbell Morgan).

VIII. PAUL'S ROMAN CITIZENSHIP SAVES HIM FROM SCOURGING, verses 24-29. Lysias may not have understood Paul's speech, and he may have been impressed by the rage of the Jews. At any rate, he ordered Paul brought into the castle and examined by scourging to ascertain what all the shouting had been about. Paul allowed himself to be tied up for the ordeal, but quietly remarked to a centurion standing by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" In great excitement the centurion sought out the chief captain and told him that Paul was a Roman. Lysias hastened to Paul. "Art thou a Roman?" "Yea." "With a great sum obtained I this citizenship," commented the captain. "But I am a Roman born," proudly asserted Paul.

Paul was not more proud of his citizenship than are some of the older Christians in India of their citizenship as a birthright from their parents. With much pride they say, "I did not become a Christian; I was one from my birth."

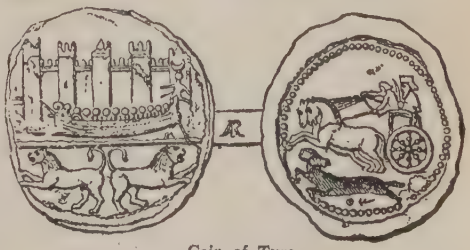
THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Why did certain Jews of Asia hate Paul? Where has Paul had experience with mobs? Describe the action of the mob at Ephesus. Where has Paul been bound with chains?

From Miletus to Cæsarea. After leaving Miletus the coasting vessel in which Paul was traveling stopped on successive nights at the islands of Cos and Rhodes, and on the third day arrived at Patara. Here Paul embarked in a swifter sailing merchant-ship that was bound directly for Phœnicia. At Tyre the ship's cargo was unloaded, and the seven days' stay gave Paul an opportunity to visit the Christians in that city. They urged Paul not to hazard his life in Jerusalem, but he was not to be turned from his purpose. When the time for departure came, the little company of men, women and children came with him to the beach, where prayer was offered and farewells were said.

Coin of Rhodes

From Tyre the journey was continued to Ptolemais, a day was spent with the Christian community there, and then the ship went on to Cæsarea. In the home of Philip of Cæsarea Paul spent several days. The prophet Agabus, who had come on from Jerusalem, warned him of danger ahead, and his traveling companions joined with the disciples of Cæsarea in beseeching him not to



Coin of Tyre

continue his journey to Jerusalem. "What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart?" cried the apostle. "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." "The will of the Lord be done," then said his friends.

Paul's Arrival in Jerusalem. From Cæsarea, Luke states with unusual exactness, "we took up our baggage and went to Jerusalem." In their company were disciples from Cæsarea accompanied by Mnason, an old disciple with whom they were to live.

The Scene of our Lesson. The scene is in the temple court and then on the stairs leading up to the Tower of Antonia. The Tower of Antonia was a fortress and a castle all in one, erected at the northeast corner of the temple area. It was an immense structure divided into splendid apartments. Josephus says that having everything necessary in itself, it seemed a city, while in magnificence it resembled a palace. At each corner there was a tower, the tallest being the one which overlooked the whole temple area. In this tower soldiers were always quartered, and when the Jews celebrated their great annual festivals an extra number were always brought there to help quell a possible riot.

For the Blackboard. To your record of last week add: Cos; Rhodes; Patara; Tyre; Ptolemais; Cæsarea; Jerusalem.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

A study of Paul's tact in addressing his hearers is well worth while. He dwells upon facts that would conciliate them and avoids words that would offend them. He addresses them as "brethren and fathers"—those fanatics who had almost compassed his death! He has by no means lost his pride in being a citizen of Tarsus, "no mean city," but instead of telling them of this he refers to his being by descent a member of the Jewish race, educated by Gamaliel, their great rabbi. He was filled with zeal for God, "even as ye are this day": such is the magnanimous way in which he refers to their fanatical frenzy that would put him to death. He speaks of the Christians as those of "this Way," and thus avoids irritating them by using the term they hated. He refers to Ananias as a "devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews," and mentions the fact that Ananias told him "the God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will." He calls Jesus "the Righteous One," which was the Jewish conception of the Messiah. And he mentions the temple, the holy place of the Jews, as the place where his commission was given him.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE SPIRIT OF THE MOB

Beginning the Lesson. Paul was a man of cosmopolitan outlook, but one city had won his devotion in a way which no other could rival. It was the city of his race—glittering with golden memories. It was the city of a noble worship and of a people mastered by a passionate loyalty to their high and righteous God, and more intimate and personal than all this, it was the city where he had come as a wide-eyed eager boy to sit at the feet of the great teacher Gamaliel and learn the meaning of life and the purposes of God in the world.

Very different from that temperamental, delicately organized boy, sensing everything with eager responsiveness, was the travel-scarred, disciplined veteran of the Cross who now came to Jerusalem with the weight of the whole world pressing upon his heart. He had been scorned and hated; he had met the hard blows of terrible hatred. But his eye still gleamed with the light of a great enthusiasm. His heart was on fire with the passion of an unalterable purpose. He heard about Jerusalem with a thousand memories tugging at his mind. But through them all one thing dominated his thought and feeling. Neither Jewish history nor his own boyhood said that last or deepest word. The vision of the One whom Jerusalem had crucified was the possessing theme of his thought. The coronation of the Crucified was the master purpose of his life.—Dr. Lynn H. Hough.

Paul's Experience in Jerusalem. See The Text Explained.

The Part Played by the Roman Authority. The part played here is that which it performs throughout The Acts. It shields infant Christianity from Jewish assailments. The good and the bad features of Roman rule were both valuable for that purpose. Its contempt of ideas, and above all for speculative differences in a religion which it regarded as a superstition, its unsympathetic incapacity for understanding

its subject nations, its military discipline, its justice, which though often tarnished was yet better than the partisan violence which it coerced, all helped to make it the defender of the first Christians. Strange that Rome should shelter and Jerusalem persecute!

Mark, too, how blindly men fulfilled God's purposes. The two bitter antagonists, Jew and Roman, seem to themselves to be working in direct opposition; but God is using them both to carry out his design. Paul must be brought to Rome, and these two forces are combined by a wisdom beyond their ken, to carry him thither. Two cogged wheels turning in opposite directions fit into each other, and grind out a resultant motion, different from either of theirs. These soldiers and that mob are like pawns on a chessboard, ignorant of the intentions of the hand which moves them. —Dr. Alexander Maclaren, in Expositions of Scripture.

Booker T. Washington's Thoughts upon Lynch Law. The habit of lynching was begun in some of our States a few years ago as a punishment for one crime; but so true is it that lawlessness breeds lawlessness that it has now grown until statistics show that more people have been lynched for other crimes, such as murder, stealing, etc. The united efforts of our best people in every community should be in the direction of getting rid of worthless and idle people from whose ranks most criminals come. But crime of some nature has been committed since the foundation of the world, even in the most highly civilized communities; and the facts show that, wherever the law is most fully observed in the punishment of crime, there crime is less likely to be committed. In my judgment, there is but one way for us in this country to get rid of the habit of lynching, and that is for all to unite in a strong and earnest effort to see that the law is complied with.

During the exciting days following the shooting of President McKinley, it was my privilege to mingle with the people in one of our Western States, and almost every man who referred to the crime expressed himself as being in favor of burning or the execution without trial of Czolgosz. As I listened to these expressions day after day, it convinced me, as never before, that a spirit of lawlessness had a hold upon the whole country that few of us realized.

I fear we have not yet realized that every open and flagrant defiance of law is anarchy. It is easy enough to decry the avowed anarchist who belongs to organizations that are anarchistic in their character, but it is not easy to put in the same classes the people who set law at defiance by an illegal hanging or burning.

Perhaps the most demoralizing and hurtful result of mob violence is the hardening effect which it has upon our youth. I think it is safe to say that on an average fifty persons witnessed the execution by lynching of every man or woman that has taken place in this country. In each case a large proportion of those who witnessed the execution have been children, or those of tender age. One of the saddest remarks that I ever heard come from the lips of a child was when one said, in my presence, that he wished he could see a man burned. In some instances, the executions by mobs have not only been witnessed by boys of tender age, but by women.

It is a notable fact that in the communities where every crime, no matter how heinous, is taken hold of by the strong arm of the law, the crimes which provoked lynching very seldom occur. The time would seem to have come when the subject of the majesty of the law should be taken up by the ministers in our pulpits throughout the country, and by every Sunday-school teacher in a way that has never been done before. It is a praiseworthy fact that the daily and religious press, especially in the South, is speaking out fearlessly and strongly against lynching.

For a number of years I have advocated industrial education largely with the idea that, in proportion as the people of my race learn to love labor for its own sake, they will not yield to the temptation to grow up in idleness.

Organized versus Individual Responsibility for Evil. Writing in England several years ago, Dr. R. F. Horton referred to the efforts of the local magistrates to forbid the sale of intoxicating drink to children under thirteen. "Now, if I could imagine myself a brewer, or a distiller, or even a publican," said Dr. Horton, "I think I should have said: 'Well, I may lose a good deal of money by it, I may even be brought near to ruin by it, but I will try to save those little children even if I do lose and am ruined;' and my belief is that if you took the individual brewer, and distiller, and publican, that is essentially what he would say. But, now look on the organized trade. The organized trade met in conference, and it passed resolutions to oppose this action of the magistrates on the ground that it was an infringement of the liberty and rights of the subject, and it succeeded. The organized trade has no conscience; it has no mercy. What does it care that little children go into

the polluted atmosphere and come out with the cans of drink; are tempted to taste, and many of them die, while they are still toddling, of delirium tremens?"

For Discussion. 1. The difficult art of compromise.

2. Lynch law.

3. Paul as seen by his contemporaries. See Chapter IV of Dr. Jefferson's The Character of Paul.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. What three charges were made against Paul, and how did he answer each? What is the exact office of the conscience? When is conscience not a safe guide? How may one attain a conscience like Paul's?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
PAUL FACES A MOB

Beginning the Lesson. We had a vivid picture of a mob at Ephesus a few weeks ago. In what way was Paul the occasion of the riot? How did the mob act? What would the mob have done, do you think, could they have had Paul in their power?

Paul Faces a Mob at Jerusalem. Paul is now in Jerusalem. It is the last visit of his life to the Holy City. He is staying with Mnason of Cyprus, an "old disciple" who has a house in Jerusalem. Through his window he can see the Pentecost crowds in the street, the crowds that he had been accustomed to since early days. "Parthians and Medes and Elamites and dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Pontus and Asia." And Asia! He does not like the look of that crowd from Asia. There is a group of them passing now, easily recognized in their bright national costumes so familiar to him in his three years at Ephesus. He could very well do without these, his bitterest opponents, the bigots who hated him and stirred up riots against him everywhere he went. He knows very well that they will be his chief danger in Jerusalem. The less he sees of them the better.

But he cannot avoid them. For the brethren at Jerusalem have put him in an embarrassing position. They have given him the cautious advice: "Brother, you must be careful. Our people here are very much concerned about your teaching. You not only abolish all distinction between the Gentiles and the chosen people; you seem even to go farther. You speak very unguardedly. They think you are overthrowing Moses and the Law. Now be advised by us. Be very cautious. Clear yourself of suspicion. Do not get religion into discredit. Shew yourself publicly a good Jew. Here are four poor men who have a Jewish vow. Take charge of them publicly. Be their sponsor and go to the temple with them daily, paying their charges for shaving their heads and other purification ceremonies. So shall men see that you are loyal to the Jewish rules."

On the seventh day they got him—those Jews from Asia. That morning they had suddenly recognized him in the streets walking with his Gentile friend, Trophimus the Ephesian, and now they see him in the temple with four poor men and they are but too ready to suspect that he had brought in the Gentile into the holy place. He had not done anything of the kind, but suspicious people will believe anything. Straightway the fierce hatred is flashing in their eyes and with a wild shout of rage the men of Asia are upon him. "Men of Israel, help! This is the wretch that teaches everywhere against Moses and the law and the temple of God. Now he has brought Gentiles into the temple and polluted the holy place!"—J. Paterson-Smyth, in The Story of St. Paul's Life and Letters.

Were These Men as Guilty as though they had Stolen Individually? Many a man or woman, boy or girl, who as an individual would scorn to do an evil thing, has been guilty of that evil when one of a group. A number of years ago a bank in England had a board of directors who speculated with the money intrusted to their care. The sums gained were divided among themselves, but the sums lost were made up by reducing the interest paid to the depositors. At last their deeds were discovered, and they were tried and convicted of swindling. All of them were men who stood well in the community, trusted for their integrity; not one of them had individually wronged his neighbor. As individuals they were honest, but as a corporation they committed wholesale robbery year after year.

The Mob. In the year 1832 the cholera broke out in Paris, and thousands died of it. It was then a new and strange disease, and everybody was made cowardly by it. No one understood, as we do now, what caused it or how it could be cured or prevented. The poorest people in that great city were terror-stricken. When so

many died and so few recovered, they were ready to believe any rumor that came to their ears. Some said, "We are all being poisoned," and it was really believed that men went about poisoning the water in the public drinking-fountains. Others said, "And the doctors in the hospitals have too many patients to attend to; some they try to cure, and the rest they poison to get rid of them." Then everybody was on the lookout for poisoners.

You may read some day a story of these cholera times in Paris, written by a Frenchman. It tells of an unfortunate man suspected and accused of being a poisoner. He denied it, but it was of no use. They tried to seize him in a shop and he broke loose and ran into the street—into the square. They ran after him, and now a great crowd gathered about him. Did they hold him till they could call the police to arrest him and take him before the judge to be tried, and punished if found guilty? No, this was a mob, and it already believed the man guilty and was going to punish him without a trial. It meant to kill him just as if he were a mad dog. Men and women struck him as he came near them, or threw things at him, even their wooden shoes, and by and by, though a giant, he fell down and was trampled to death by the cruel mob. All this took place on an island in the River Seine, in front of the great church of Notre Dame. A part of the mob dragged the body to one of the bridges and tossed it over into the water. Another part had already found another victim. It was a priest who knew the man they had murdered, and cried out, "He was innocent!" "You too are a poisoner," they replied, and they began to beat and to stone him also. He ran from them to the church, but he could not get in, and he stood with his back to the wall, more dead than alive. What could save him from falling, from being kicked and trodden to death, from being thrown into the dark river?

Suddenly a door near him was opened, another priest seized him and pulled him in, and the door was closed. Gabriel was the name of this savior, and he had just time to get the poor man behind a low railing, where he fell helpless, when the mob burst in the door and rushed upon them. Gabriel tried to talk to them and excite their pity. They heard him, but his words had no effect upon them. At last Gabriel bade the leader of the mob come inside the railing, pointed to the fallen body of the priest, and said, "Now kill him!" He shrank back. "What, I alone kill him!" He refused and the priest was saved. No one in the mob could be found to do by himself what all together would have done.

Shall we go with the mob and do what it does, and think we are doing right because others are doing the same thing? Both men and children sometimes act that way. Yet if any one of you had a knife or any article that he prized, would he give it up more willingly because a dozen boys told him they meant to take it from him, than because only one did? Could one boy be a thief if he alone took it, and not a thief if he got eleven others to join him in taking it from you against your will? —Wendell P. Garrison, in Parables for School and Home.

I Am an American Citizen. Dr. Newman of the American Baptist Hospital at Ungkunk, China, was saved from death by his American citizenship as Paul by his Roman. He had been severely beaten by a mob of soldiers.

"They drove me at the end of the rope, and with constant beating to the north gate and through the streets of the city—a trail of blood marking my passage. Finally they stopped on the edge of a pond, evidently to decide what to do with me next. Some were for tying my feet also and throwing me into the pond. Others were for beating me to death, and still others advocated just shooting me and being done with it quickly. While they were arguing, I saw a soldier looking directly at me. I called him and explained to him that I was an American citizen. He spoke to the leaders and advised them to turn me loose. Evidently many in the mob were of like mind. Finally one fellow untied the rope from my wrists and let me go."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Make no accusation which you cannot prove, and believe no accusation which is not proved to you—is as good a rule for the street corner as for the court room.—The Youth's Companion.

There is no grievance that is a fit object of redress by mob law.—Abraham Lincoln.

The sins that ye do by two and two
Ye shall pay for one by one.—Kipling.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What has happened between the last lesson and this? 2. Who was Tertullus, and of what had he accused Paul? 3. How did Paul answer each accusation? 4. What is conscience? 5. What did Paul say about his conscience? 6. How do you suppose he "exercised" himself to have such a conscience?

PAUL BEFORE FELIX

GOLDEN TEXT: Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offense toward God and men always. Acts 24.16

LESSON Acts 23.1-24.27 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 86.11-17

ACTS 24.10 And when the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, Paul answered,

Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I cheerfully make my defence: 11 seeing that thou canst take knowledge that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem: 12 and neither in the temple did they find me disputing with any man or stirring up a crowd, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city. 13 Neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me. 14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets; 15 having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust. 16 Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men always.

22 But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your matter. 23 And he gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence; and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him.

24 But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. 25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE CASE AGAINST PAUL PRESENTED BY TERTULLUS, verses 1-9. See The Historical Background. Lysias had charged Paul's accusers to appear against him before Felix. Within five days the high priest Ananias with a deputation from the Sanhedrin arrived in Cæsarea. Paul was summoned for trial. Tertullus, the advocate whom the Jews had engaged, presented their case against him. After fulsome words of flattery for Felix, even expressing gratitude for his reforms, Tertullus accused "this pestilential fellow" of three things: inciting disturbances among the Jews throughout the Roman Empire—an offense against the Roman law; being the leader of the sect of the Nazarenes—an offense against the law of Moses; and defiling the temple—an offense against both the law of Moses and the Roman law, since the latter protected the Jews in their worship. When Tertullus concluded his speech, the deputation of Jews emphatically endorsed all that he had said.

"We all abhor flattery unless it be to us or from us, and then we call it by another name" (John A. Shedd).

II. PAUL'S DEFENSE, verses 10-21. When Felix made a gesture signifying that Paul should make his defense, Paul with calm dignity answered the charges that had been brought against him. He began in a courteous way, saying that he spoke with great confidence because Felix had judged his nation for some time and was well acquainted with the state of affairs. Contrast his courteous beginning with the fulsome flattery of the opening words of Tertullus.

Then Paul denied that he was a disturber of the public peace (the first charge made, verse 5); it had been but twelve days since he came to Jerusalem for the very opposite purpose of worshiping there; investigation could be made and no proof of his enemies' charge could be found.

That he belonged to the so-called sect of the Nazarenes Paul acknowledged, but he was not an apostate from the Jewish religion (the second charge, verse 5), for he served the same God and believed the law and the prophets. "The law and the prophets" stand for the Old Testament writings. Christianity, the Way, was not a new religion in Paul's mind, but a development of Judaism. "To believe the Bible is something more than to believe its letter and sometimes something different. It is to believe what God intended by the letter. If the Scriptures taught circumcision and other ceremonies, Paul knew their intent and their limitations. He knew and defined the object of the law (Gal. 3.24). He saw no antithesis between his teaching and that of Moses (Rom. 3.31; Gal. 3.21)" (Dr. James M. Stifler).

He believed in the resurrection of the just and the unjust, as did those Jews before him, Paul claimed. The Pharisees and the nation as a whole believed in the resurrection, but the sect of the Sadducees denied it. Because of this belief, Paul

strove to have a clear conscience toward God and toward men. Paul does not affirm perfect attainment, but perfect aim.

"He's armed without that's innocent within" (Pope).

The charge of defiling the temple (verse 6) he next denied. His purpose in journeying to Jerusalem had been to bring to his nation alms and offerings (the collection which, at Paul's request, the Gentile churches had sent for the relief of the poor at Jerusalem, Rom. 15.25, 26), and his enemies had found him carrying out a Jewish rite in the temple, with no crowd or tumult. There were, however, certain Jews (compare Acts 21.27) from Asia—and Paul in his excitement does not finish his sentence, but exclaims, "These enemies ought to be here to make accusation if they have aught against me! Or let these men who are present say of what wrongdoing I have been found guilty in the trial before the Sanhedrin. It is because I have affirmed the resurrection of the dead that I am arraigned this day before you."

III. FELIX POSTPONES DECISION, verses 22, 23. Felix, having for a Roman a good knowledge of Christianity, saw that Paul was hated because he was a Christian, but he would not pronounce him innocent of the charges made against him. He adjourned the trial, his pretext for not settling the matter being that he would await the coming of Lysias. He ordered the centurion to keep Paul a prisoner, but to grant him the privilege of seeing his friends and having them minister unto him. We know that Luke and Aristarchus were with him, and that Philip the evangelist and his family lived in Cæsarea.

"Felix was not bound to fix any definite time for the trial, but might defer it at his own arbitrary pleasure; and he might also commit the prisoner at his discretion to any one of the several kinds of custody recognized by the Roman law. These were as follows: First, confinement in the public jail (*custodia publica*), which was the most severe kind; the common jails throughout the Empire being dungeons of the worst description, where the prisoners were kept in chains, or even bound in positions of torture. Of this we have seen an example in the confinement of Paul and Silas at Philippi. Secondly, free custody (*custodia libera*), which was the mildest kind. Here the accused was committed to the charge of a magistrate, or senator, who became responsible for his appearance on the day of trial; but this species of detention was only employed in the case of men of high rank. Thirdly, military custody (*custodia militaris*), which was introduced at the beginning of the Imperial régime. In this last custody the accused was given in charge of a soldier, who was responsible with his own life for the safe keeping of his prisoner. This was further secured by chaining the prisoner's right hand to the soldier's left. The soldiers, of course, relieved one another in this duty. Their prisoner was usually kept in their barracks, but sometimes allowed to reside in a private house under their charge. It was under this last species of custody that Paul was now placed by Felix. It is obvious that the centurion might render it more or less galling, according to his inclination, or the commands he had received" (Dr. F. W. Farrar).

"To take bribes was in direct violation of the Roman law, but was in perfect accordance with the character of this unjust and avaricious judge. The Julian law expressly prohibited a judge from receiving anything for a person's imprisonment or liberation. Nor was Felix the only instance of a governor of Judea who was guilty of taking bribes. Albinus, one of his successors, on his departure from the province, freed all those prisoners who gave him money; 'by which means,' as Josephus remarks, 'the prisons were indeed emptied, but the country was filled with robbers' " (Paton J. Gloag).

"Do not be blind to this truth—that if you have no higher motive than your own personal interest, it means that your soul is for sale if the price be made sufficiently high" (President Hadley).

IV. FELIX BEFORE PAUL, verses 24-26. Some days later Felix sent for Paul and desired him to tell him and his wife Drusilla about the Way, the faith in Jesus Christ. Drusilla was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I (whose death is narrated in Acts 12.20-23), who had deserted her husband to live with Felix.

"It is strange that Felix and Drusilla should have been willing to give Paul a hearing, save that the outraged conscience often hurries men to anticipate their sentence and doom. They are fascinated as the moth by the light that will destroy it. They play with the outward circles of the whirlpool that suck them down" (Dr. F. B. Meyer).

Paul talked about matters relating to the conduct of Felix: righteousness—"Felix supposed he might perpetuate with impunity any kind of villainy," said Tacitus; self-

control—Felix had induced Drusilla to leave her husband; and the judgment to come—Felix had murdered Jonathan, the hight priest, and had committed many other sins. Paul talked so effectively that Felix trembled. Compare John the Baptist's talk with Herod, Mk. 6.14-20.

"Fear is not faith, but it may lead to faith or it may lead to hardening" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

"When I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me," said Felix.

"It is a solemn thing to say tomorrow when God says today, for man's tomorrow and God's today never meet." One-fourth of the human race dies before reaching the seventh year, one-half before the seventeenth year. Out of one hundred persons only six live to be sixty years old. Out of five hundred only one lives to be eighty years old. Is it safe to put off deciding the greatest of all questions till a more convenient season?

Although Felix sent for Paul often after this, it was only with the hope that Paul would give him a bribe for his freedom.

"Several facts show clearly that, during the following four years, Paul had considerable command of money. Imprisonment and a long lawsuit are expensive. Felix hoped for a bribe, and a rich Roman official did not look for a small gift. Paul, therefore, wore the outward appearance of a man of means, like one in a position to bribe a Roman procurator. At Cæsarea he was confined in the palace of Herod; but he had to live, to maintain two attendants, and to keep up a respectable appearance. Many comforts, which are almost necessities, would be given by the guards as long as they were kept in good humor, and it is expensive to keep guards in good humor. In Rome he was able to hire a lodging for himself and to live there, maintaining, of course, the soldier who guarded him. Where then, was the money procured? Was it from new contributions collected in the churches? That seems most improbable, from their general poverty, from Paul's personal character, and from the silence of Luke on the point. Luke himself was probably a man dependent on his profession for his livelihood. There seems no alternative except that Paul's hereditary property was used in these four years. As to the exact facts, we must remain in ignorance. If Paul hitherto voluntarily abstained from using his fortune he now found himself justified by the importance of the case in acting differently. If, on the other hand, he had for a time been disowned by his family, then either a reconciliation had been brought about during his danger, or through death property had come to him as legal heir" (Professor Ramsay).

V. PAUL LEFT IN PRISON, verse 27. Two years passed, and Felix was succeeded in office by Porcius Festus, but he left Paul in prison so as to gain the favor of the Jews. Luke was with Paul and tradition says that it was during these two years that Luke learned about the life of Jesus and wrote his Gospel.

What was Paul doing during those two years? "We cannot be certain that he wrote any epistles. Do you think he was fretting? Or mourning over his churches as he paced his prison? We may be absolutely certain he was doing nothing like that—he was growing and ripening in his own inward life. For twenty years he had been fighting amid the excitement and stress of a glorious campaign. New views of Christ had been borne upon his heart; new aspects of the gospel had arrested him. It wanted leisure now to focus everything, and God bestowed that leisure at Cæsarea. Compare the letters that were written after these years, with the letters we know were written before them. Note the richness and depth and glory of the later ones, their exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ; their fresh insistence upon spiritual union, their recognition of the possibilities of sainthood; their method of bringing the most majestic doctrines to bear on the common duties of every day—and you will see what these two years did for Paul" (G. H. Morrison).

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When has Paul been charged with disturbing the public peace? With offending against the laws of the Jews? With being the leader of a new sect? What did "the Way" mean?

Paul before the Sanhedrin. On the morrow after the events of our last lesson, Lysias summoned a meeting of the Sanhedrin and brought Paul before him.

Paul had been accused in the temple of teaching contrary to the law, and his first words protested his innocence, his conscience testified that his life had been loyal. Thereupon the high priest ordered those near to smite Paul in the mouth, and Paul's

fiery temper flamed forth: "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall," he boldly declared (the high priest was what Jesus had called the Pharisees, a whited sepulcher like the tombs, full of corruption within, but presenting a fair appearance without); "sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" Those near protested against such language to the high priest, and Paul became calmer and confessed that he had forgotten the priest's office, that he should not have spoken evil of a ruler. Knowing full well that he could receive no just judgment from that tribunal, he "flung an apple of discord among them" by declaring himself a thorough Pharisee, persecuted because of his Messianic hope and belief in the resurrection of the dead. Thereupon the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, were violently angered, the Pharisees took Paul's part against them, and so stormy a scene ensued that Lysias, fearing for the life of his prisoner, ordered his troops to take him back to the castle.

Paul's Comforter. To Paul in prison, bruised and depressed, keenly disappointed in the great hope of reconciling the Judean Christians, and keenly feeling the hatred of his own countrymen, there came in the night a word of divine approval and hope. "Be of good cheer," was the message, as he had testified for his Lord in Jerusalem, so should he in Rome.

A Plot against Paul's Life which Failed. Meanwhile, forty Jews had vowed that they would never eat nor drink till they had killed Paul, and when day came they presented to the chief priests and the elders a monstrous conspiracy. The latter were to have the Sanhedrin ask Lysias to bring Paul before them again to judge his case, for the former trial had been interrupted, and these forty men would slay him on the way thither. To this the priests and elders seem to have readily agreed. The plot, however, became known in some way to Paul's nephew, who reported it at once to Paul in prison. Paul asked one of the centurions to take the young man to the chief captain, as he had something of importance to tell. Lysias led him aside for a private conference, and the youth told of the plot. Charging his informer to tell no one, Lysias dismissed him, and quickly carried out a plan to outwit the conspirators.

"In the Great War, some of the most brilliant successes of the French were achieved by bringing up a reserve force that had been carefully concealed, which General Joffre knew just where to find at the right moment. Some of the earlier British losses were due to lack of such reserves. God never makes the latter mistake. He always knows where and when to produce the needed forces. Paul's sister's son was such a force."

At nine that evening Paul was provided with a horse and started off with an escort of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen. He was being sent to Felix, the governor at Cæsarea. "There are many things which we would be glad to know at the moment when Paul left Jerusalem never to see it again," observes Dr. Stifler in his Introduction to The Acts. "What were the thoughts of his great heart? Did he communicate with James and the elders? Did he have an opportunity to say farewell to his kinsfolk? Luke omits everything else to write minutely how the order and discipline of the Roman world rescued Paul and defeated the hatred of Judaism. He tells the number of soldiers, the number of their commanders, he describes the journey and makes us see the whole event as distinctly as if he had been there. We can almost hear the rattling of the soldiers' sabers, and the clang of the horses' hoofs as they start down the road to Antipatris. If Luke lingers thus over the story and fills it with details, he must intend to show how God's invisible hand could use the world power to serve him in protecting his servant from apostate Judaism."

At Cæsarea. All that night they traveled till Antipatris, thirty-five miles away, was reached. The danger from the assassins being over, the soldiers returned; the cavalry continued the journey with Paul to Cæsarea, and took him at once to the procurator's court. Felix read the letter which they had brought from Lysias, a cleverly constructed letter narrating that he had rescued the prisoner from rioters in the temple because the latter was a Roman, and informing the governor about the trial before the Sanhedrin where he had been found guilty of nothing worthy of bonds or of death, and stating that he had directed his accusers to appear before Felix. "From what province are you?" questioned the governor, wishing to learn whether Paul came within his jurisdiction. "Cilicia," returned Paul. Felix was procurator of Judea, under Festus, who was proconsul of Syria. Cilicia at this time was united to Syria for purposes of government. Telling Paul that he would hear his case when his accusers arrived, Felix ordered him kept in Herod's palace. Thus Paul was back again in Cæsarea within two weeks after Agabus had predicted his bonds, but he was of good cheer, he was certain of going to Rome.

The Place of the Trial. The trial was held in the Prætorium, "Herod's Palace," at Cæsarea, and doubtless there Paul was imprisoned. A building on the mole now bears the name of "The Prison of St. Paul;" it dates from the time of the Crusades.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The faculty by which we discriminate between right and wrong we call conscience. It is the judge sitting in the inner tribunal of the mind. The power to discriminate between what is right and what is wrong has to be carefully trained. Paul's conscience did not trouble him at all when he was persecuting the Christians—he verily thought then that he ought to persecute them. The true conscience also tells us that we ought to do what we have decided to be right, and makes us desire to do the highest that we know. The sense of "oughtness" has to be cultivated by exercise, and the power to carry out the right desire comes through the cultivation of the will. If the conscience is the judge, the will is the executive power. The training of the will to obey the behests of the conscience is of the utmost importance.

"The sunrise of the word *ought*" is a thought-compelling, pictorial phrase. It means the dawn in the consciousness of the sense of moral obligation. The sunrise had become high noon with Paul when he declared, "Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offense toward God and man always."

Drive home today the thought that it is possible for a human being so to honor his responsibility in the sight of God and his obligation to men as to have a conscience void of offense.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
HOW TO HAVE A GOOD CONSCIENCE

Beginning the Lesson. When Agrippa I, King of Judea, died in 44 A. D., Judea was a Roman Province, and its rulers, appointed by the Emperor, were called procurators. In 51 or later, the date is uncertain, Antonius Felix was appointed procurator. He had been born and brought up as the slave of Antonia, the mother of Claudius Cæsar, and is therefore called Antonius Felix, but because he received his freedom from Claudius he is sometimes called Claudius Felix. Felix "exercised the authority of a king with the spirit of a slave," says Tacitus in his History; and in his Annals he represents him as indulging in all kinds of cruelty and lawlessness. When Jonathan, the high priest, expostulated with him for his misrule, he had him assassinated in the temple by the Sicarii. This is the man before whom Paul is now on trial, and the man by whom, Tertullus says, the Jews enjoy much peace and evils are corrected for this nation!

An Awakened Conscience. If you bring a man like Felix, or a very much better man than he—any of you who hear me now—into contact with these three thoughts, "righteousness, temperance, judgment to come," the effect of such a direct appeal to moral convictions will always be more or less to awaken a sense of failure, insufficiency, defect, sin, and to create a certain creeping dread that if he sets himself against the great law of God, that law of God will have a way of crushing him. The fear is well founded, and not alone does the contemplation of God's law excite it. God's gospel comes to us, and just because it is a gospel, and is intended to lead you and me to love and trust Jesus Christ, and give our whole hearts and souls to him—just because it is the best "good news" that ever came into the world, it begins often by making a man feel what a sinful man he is, and how he has gone against God's law, and how there hang over him, by the very necessities of the case and the constitution of the universe, consequences bitter and painful.

The awakened conscience is just like the sense of pain in the physical world, it has a work to do and a mission to perform. It is meant to warn you off dangerous ground. Thank God for pain! It keeps off death many a time. And in like manner thank God for a swift conscience that speaks! It is meant to ring an alarm-bell to us, to make us, as the Bible has it, "flee for refuge to the hope that is set before us." Have you used that sense of evil and wrongdoing, when it has been aroused in your conscience, to lead you to Jesus Christ, or what have you done with it?

There are two persons in this Book of Acts who pass through the same stages of feeling up to a certain point, and then diverge. Felix becoming afraid, recoils, shuts himself up, puts away the message that disturbs him, and settles himself back into his evil. The Philippian jailor becoming afraid, like a sensible man tries to find out the reason of his fear and how to get rid of it; and falls down at the apostles' feet

and says, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"—Dr. Alexander Maclaren, in Expositions of Scripture.

The Duty of Educating the Conscience. Some one has said that conscience is like a sun-dial—when the truth shines on it, it points the right way, but it may be covered up so that no truth can fall on it, or false light may fall on it, and then it leads one astray. The owner of the sun-dial must see that it receives the true light, and so must the owner of the conscience. Paul's conscience was void of offense toward God when as Saul the Pharisee he persecuted the Christians. "I verily thought with myself," he said, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." When he found that false light had been falling on his conscience he did not say that he would not trust it again, but he took the utmost pains to let the true light shine on it, and then he trusted its guidance implicitly.

"Men get embarrassed by the common cases of a misguided conscience," said Dr. Thomas Arnold in one of his letters, "but a compass may be out of order as well as a conscience, and the needle may point due south if you hold a powerful magnet in that direction. Still, the compass, generally speaking, is the true and sure guide, and so is the conscience; and you can trace the deranging influence on the latter quite as surely as on the former."

A Conscience Haunted by Offense toward God and Man. The writer of a letter published in the New York Sun has attained financial success, but he would give all his wealth for Paul's peaceful conscience. Here are his words:

"When I die I shall leave my children each a fortune, but when I think it over, day after day, I can only be ashamed of it all. I suppose I was no worse than the others; I know some were worse than I. I could always say, 'It's good business,' but I forgot that there was such a thing as a square deal. If I could get the better of an associate, or a customer, or an employee, I did. Anything that I could do to attain my own success was good business, and I did it.

"I have given to charity, headed subscriptions, but that doesn't satisfy me. I know what I have done wasn't manly. I would give all I possess tonight if I could say, 'I have given every man a square deal, I have done no man a wrong.' "

How to Have a Good Conscience. Every thought and every act proceeding out of and beyond self, and therefore having relations with an environment, is either God-ward or neighbor-ward. Now, to be in harmony with both sides of our spiritual environment is spiritual peace. It is the condition of knowing with the profoundest certainty—a certainty infinitely deeper than that established by any mere logical process—that the soul is discharging its true function in the grand economy of existence; that it is one with the Infinite Purpose, and therefore one with the Eternal Good. Nothing is more impossible than to shake the confidence or destroy the happiness of a soul that feels itself to be at peace with God and man. The sole condition of this harmony with spiritual environment is love—love God-ward and love man-ward.—James Buckham, in The Heritage of Life.

Conscience

Vicar of God, who hast through time
  Thy sacred sovereignty maintained,
Before whose throne the sons of men
  In solemn judgment stand arraigned;
Whose sweet approval is our peace,
  Whose smile can threat'ning fear expel,
Whose frown is aye the foretaste here
  Of all the woes and throes of hell,
Thou art alike our judge and friend,
And thou wilt safely guide our way unto the end.

Inspirer true of deeds sublime,
  'Tis thou dost nerve the hero's arm;
And martyrs, harkening to thy call,
  Unscathed have triumphed over harm.
No coward he who follows thee,
  Clad in the armor thou dost give;
His courage is an hundredfold,
  And he fears not to die, or live.
Time and eternity shall make
For weal, to him who doth endure for conscience' sake.

—Zitella Cocke.

For Discussion. 1. "Conscience is a safe guide only when God is the Guide of the conscience."

2. "There is no greater need in the Christian life than that of recognizing the place of conscience, and of cultivating a consideration of its demands at any cost. A disciplined conscience is man's best friend. It may not be his most amiable, but it is his most faithful monitor."

3. Bribery scandals in our government.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What would have followed if Agrippa had said "Yes" to Paul's question? 2. What, if he had said "No"? 3. What did Agrippa mean by his answer? 4. In what way was Festus like Pilate?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
PAUL AND FELIX: A CONTRAST

Beginning the Lesson. In the ancient Greek and Roman courts it was customary to have a paid lawyer present a case, just as it is in courts of today. The lawyer on the side making a complaint against a prisoner began, then the lawyer for the prisoner replied. In this way each side was allowed two speeches, but the time of each was limited. We have heard in The Acts of many trials; in the trial of Paul before Felix at Cæsarea, we first hear of a paid lawyer. His name is Tertullus, and he represents the Jews of Jerusalem who so fiercely hate Paul. You must begin your plea by praising the judge, was the rule in those days, and Tertullus does not forget this. What does he say of Felix? (Historical Background.)

Paul and Felix Contrasted. See The Text Explained.

An Arraignment of Felix. There in his small chair of state upon the tessellated pavement sits Felix the fitful, finding new sensations in the pale and gray-haired Jewish scholar who stands manacled before him, until the sensations are turned suddenly sour by Paul's fearlessness, and the judge quails before his helpless prisoner. Tacitus gives Felix a pretty bad name when he says: "In the practice of all kinds of lust and cruelty he exercised the power of a king with the temper of a slave." He was the creature of impulse and emotional passion; strong where his own selfish feelings were concerned, as he proved by his shameless union with Drusilla, yet in pure will-power a simple imbecile. The shilly-shally of cowardly delay, mixed with a maudlin sentimentality and an ill-concealed bias towards cupidity, stand out in his dealings with Paul. "I will hear all you have to say as soon as your accusers have arrived;" "When Lysias, the commanding officer, comes down, I will give my decision in your case;" "Go for the present, but when I find an opportunity, I will send for you again"—there you have the unconscious self-revelation of this libertine's will-forsaken, dilatory character;—Paul dragging out an unjust imprisonment of two years, palliated only by a sentimental relaxation of the prison rules, Felix hoping meanwhile for a bribe, and hankering always after popularity.

Little wonder that his Jewish subjects overthrew the man, in spite of his guileful bids for popularity; for the Hebrews, with all their faults, have never shown a tolerance for weakness. His very name, as it happens, points to the core of his character: Felix, the would-be "happy" man, the whole world focussed in his feelings.—Dr. James A. Scherer.

What Conscience Is. Conscience is the voice whereby God speaks in our hearts. You know that you ought to do this or that; you have a feeling which impels you to it: then God speaks directly to you. You know that you ought not to do this or that: as you turn your face or your mind in that direction you have an uneasy sense of transgression: then God is telling you that it is wrong. The good Christian is very sensitive to this inner voice, and very obedient to it. He has a quick perception of the difference between good and evil. There are many things which he will not do, some of which seem innocent enough, because he knows that he ought not. "I ought not to do that because it is wrong." We want men and women, boys and girls, in the Christian Church who have very clear and strong convictions concerning sin.—Dean Hodges, in The Human Nature of the Saints.

How Paul Attained a Good Conscience. A certain Chinese wishing to keep tally with his conscience, did so by means of beans. He had three bags, in one of which were black beans, in another yellow, while the third was empty. When he did something for which his conscience rebuked him, he put a black bean in the empty

bag, and then when he did some especially good act he put in a yellow bean. At the end of each month he counted the beans, and if the black predominated he did "acts of merit"—such as buying live fish and setting them free—until he felt that he had evened things up. Then he went on again with the tally.

What do you think of his method? What do you think of the way he atoned for the deeds which had troubled his conscience? What did Paul say about his conscience? In that statement what words show how he aimed to have a good conscience? He *exercised it:* how do you suppose he did this? Our word *exercise* comes from a Greek word which means literally to *practise gymnastics.* Paul practised self-denial as strenuously as an athlete practises his exercises. In all his relations with God and with men, in the intentions of his heart as well as in the deeds of his life, in great things and in little, he strove to do what was right.

Conscience is the Signal Bell. I suppose all of us have heard the bell which is used at railroad crossings to warn passers-by that a train is coming. It stands in a signal-box, and sometimes before the train is in sight it sets up a clatter which puts everyone on the lookout for danger. I thought as I heard one of these bells the other day what a fine thing it would be if we could have some signal within us to tell us when sin is near, to give us warning.

But God *has* given us an inward signal when sin is near. They say that where they test money in Washington to see whether it is counterfeit or not, the clerks get so expert that when they touch a counterfeit bill a shiver goes over them as if they had plunged into a cold bath. And if you are careful to obey your consciences when they tell you that a thing is wrong, the signal will come clear as a bell each time, and you will know without thinking very long, or asking someone else, whether a thing is wrong. Listen to the signal. It is God's voice whispering within you.—Condensed from The Man with the Iron Shoes, by Howard J. Chidley.

Ma's Conscience. In a story by Alice Louise Lee, a woman whom all her friends called "Ma" had induced a friend to invest her money in a company that failed. Long years afterwards, when by the hardest toil she had saved enough money, she announced her intention of giving it all to this friend. A young man tried to reason with her, to coerce her conscience. "But don't you see, Ma, that your sense of obligation is far-fetched?" he asked. "There's no law that could for a moment hold you responsible."

"You needn't talk law to me," responded Ma. "That Chatham Trust Company went by law,—some bankrupt law or other,—and so left the folks in Maplewood pretty badly off. Anyway you can fix it, I owe Delia Smith that money, and after seein' her all bent over and trembly and hard-workin', you can't get that idea out of my head."

Here Ma smiled tremulously and raised a corner of her apron to her eyes. "Don't you see," she added, gently, "I couldn't take a mite of comfort if I didn't do what I see is the right thing? I'd rather feel easy and clear inside than have all the money I ever saw. I couldn't enjoy it a bit if I had to think all the time it really belonged to some one else."

Sentence Sermons to Remember. Conscience is the power to feel the right and the wrong, with a sense of responsibility, both before and after conduct.—Dr. Olin A. Curtis.

"Three things are great—
Conscience and will,
And courage to fulfill
The duties they create."

"Though courts of law neglect to curb transgression,
The court of conscience always is in session."

"Remorse is simply conscience making the human soul suffer within itself for its disobedience of conscience in the days gone by."

I feel within me
A peace above all earthly dignities,
A still and quiet conscience.—Shakespeare.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was Paul asked to defend himself before Agrippa? (Acts 25.) 2. Write Paul's entire address in your own words. 3. What is the meaning of the figure of speech in verse 26? 4. What is the meaning of the Golden Text?

PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA

GOLDEN TEXT: I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Acts 26.19

LESSON Acts 25.1 to 26.32 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 43.1-5

REFERENCE MATERIAL Matthew 10.32, 33, 37-39; Luke 23.13-23

ACTS 26.19 Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20 but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance. 21 For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me. 22 Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; 23 how that the Christ must suffer, *and* how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus made his defence, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad. 25 But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness. 26 For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. 28 And Agrippa *said* unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian. 29 And Paul *said,* I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: 31 and when they had withdrawn, they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. 32 And Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE AGRIPPA, verses 1-23. King Agrippa was Herod Agrippa II, ruler of small principalities in northern Palestine, with the title of king; son of Herod Agrippa I, who slew James the son of Zebedee; great nephew of Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist; great grandson of Herod the Great, who massacred the innocents in his attempts to kill the infant Jesus. Paul began his defense not only of himself but of the gospel he preached by courteously referring to Agrippa's knowledge of Jewish questions and customs, and then he told of his own life as a Pharisee, his persecution of Christians, his conversion, and his commission to preach to the Gentiles. To the heavenly vision granted him on the way to Damascus he had been obedient.

"It is not enough that a man should say, 'Whereupon I saw the vision,' or 'Whereupon I was convinced of the vision,' or 'Whereupon I understood the vision.' Sight, apprehension, theology, orthodoxy, they are all very well, but the right result is, 'Whereupon I was not disobedient unto the vision.' And unless your knowledge of Christ makes you do, and keeps you from doing, a thousand things, it is only an idle vision which adds to your guilt" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

Paul had faithfully carried out the command received on the way to Damascus, by preaching at Damascus, at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that every one must repent and turn to God and do works worthy of repentance.

"The Christian life is not that of visionaries, it is a life of action. The first thought of those who live it day by day is of something immediately to be done. It is this practical quality of the Christian life which keeps it both healthy and honorable. For the soul as for the nation, service is the highest honor" (Dr. John Kelman).

Because of his preaching the Jews had seized him in the temple and tried to kill him. But God had helped him, and he had continued to testify to all that which the prophets and Moses had foretold—a suffering and a risen Christ, the Light unto all the world, Jews and Gentiles alike.

II. THE INTERRUPTION MADE BY FESTUS, verses 24-26. Festus became impatient over Paul's words, for he did not care to hear about a Judean who had been crucified, and he broke in roughly with the remark, "Paul thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad." Professor Ramsay says that Festus meant,

"Paul, you are a great philosopher, but you have no common sense." See 2 Cor. 5.13. "In the ancient world madness was closely associated with inspiration; a madman was supposed to be possessed by some supernatural power and was looked upon with awe. Festus must have had some such feeling. The mention of Moses and the prophets suggested to him that through excessive study of Jewish lore the apostle had become possessed of a religious frenzy."

"I tell you, what we want today is a few madmen like him; men who fear nothing but sin, and love nothing but God" (D. L. Moody).

Paul replied with the utmost courtesy: "I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness." The life and death of Jesus, about which he had just been speaking, "had not been done in a corner," he declared, using a figurative expression which meant that they were well known events.

"You know that God is a reality to this man, and he makes him a reality to you. The light which never shone on sea or land suddenly glowed in that audience chamber while Paul spoke. Festus tried to thrust aside the sudden, vivid impression by calling Paul a learned madman. There must have been dark midnight hours thereafter when he would wake to the sound of the voice of the slight, intense Jewish prisoner, and would see in the blackness a face glowing with the power of a great purpose and radiant with the sense of the presence of God" (Dr. Lynn H. Hough).

"Our lesson is really a study in the eloquence which character gives. It is a study in the oratory which can come only from personal experience. What Paul had experienced turned his words into weapons. The life God had given to him made his words living. The lesson gives a stimulus to such an openness to God's work in us that he may speak through us" (Dr. Lynn H. Hough).

III. PAUL'S APPEAL TO AGRIPPA, verses 27-29. Turning to Agrippa, Paul suddenly said, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." At this time Agrippa had been ruling for eighteen years in Palestine and might well be familiar with Jewish beliefs.

"I see here an example of the danger of a superficial familiarity with Christian truth. Agrippa knew, in a general way, a good deal not only about the prophets and the Jewish religion, but of the outstanding facts of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But was he any better for it? No; it stood in the way of his apprehending the truths which he thought that he understood" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

Paul's personal thrust—a prisoner addressing a king,—his confident expectation of an affirmative answer, with its implied reference to Agrippa's Jewish extraction, was resented by Agrippa, as his ironical answer shows. If Agrippa had admitted his knowledge of the prophets he would then have had either to agree with Paul's interpretation or to side with Paul's accusers.

"With but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian," said Agrippa. With much regret we must give up the familiar translation of the Authorized Version, which has been the text of countless sermons—"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," for the Greek does not give the cry of a soul "under conviction," but the jest of a proud Roman. "Too easily you hope to make a Christian of me!" "Soon you will be making me out a Christian as well as a Jew" was his meaning. "There is a world of contempt in Agrippa's words, in the very putting side by side of the two objects. 'Me! Me!' with a capital M— 'Me a Christian!' He thinks of his dignity, poor creature. It was not such a very tremendous dignity, after all. He was a petty kinglet, permitted by the grace of Rome to live and pose as if he were the real thing, and yet he struts and claps his wings and crows on his little hillock as if it were a mountain. 'Me a Christian!' 'The great Agrippa *a Christian*'" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

Nobly did Paul answer him. "I would to God, that whether with little or with much (persuasion), not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am (a Christian), except these bonds." "The saying, in its very tenderness, expresses the utmost contempt for all that these men enjoyed and were living for. Life meant for those men sensual pleasures, pompous shows, command of money, power and ambition—cups most of which Paul had tasted. He knew the measure of satisfaction they would yield. And he had stepped up from this to a higher platform, to a life in which vulgar ambitions were forgotten, and the pleasures of the senses were pushed out by mightier joys; to a life in which enthusiasm, hope,

love, great aims, and the friendship of God and fellowship with Christ, were supreme. Standing there, with the chains upon his wrists, despised or pitied by all the spectators, he felt a joyous liberty, a serene calm, a fulness of unutterable emotion, a lofty grandeur of soul, such as he knew that they had never felt and known. He was quite sure that life meant more and deeper and nobler things than had ever entered their hearts to conceive" (J. C. Greenhough).

"No more he feels upon his high-raised arm
The ponderous chain, than does the playful child
The bracelet formed of many a flowery link;
Heedless of self, forgetful that his life
Is now to be defended by his words,
He only thinks of doing good to them
That seek his life."

"The apostle was perfectly sure of the trend of his life. There is no rude pride in a man's declaration that he is 'marching to Zion.' He may slip and even fall, but he will fall with his face to the light. Paul did not speak in whispers, 'I hope I am following the Savior.' He spoke in terms of perfect assurance, and his confidence acted like a splendid contagion. It would never do for an Alpine guide to pause and hesitate, and speak in stammers concerning his knowledge of the road. He must step out confidently in order that the others may follow confidently in his steps. Paul was just an Alpine guide into the hill country of the Eternal God!" (Dr. J. H. Jowett).

IV. THE DECISION, verses 30-32. Agrippa, Festus, Bernice, and all that sat with Paul then withdrew, and when by themselves expressed their belief in Paul's innocence. He had done nothing worthy of death or of imprisonment. Had he not appealed unto Cæsar, he might have been set at liberty, Agrippa declared.

The analogy between this trial of Paul and that of Jesus must strike every reader. Both Pilate and Agrippa expressed their opinion that their prisoner was innocent, claimed no responsibility in the matter, and yet yielded to the clamor of the Jews because they were weak.

"Agrippa listens to Paul; Bernice listens; Festus listens. And what comes of it? Only this: 'And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, 'This man hath done nothing worthy of death or of bonds.' May I translate into a modern equivalent: And when they were gone aside, they talked among themselves saying, 'This man preached a very impressive sermon,' or, 'This man preached a very wearisome sermon,' and there an end" (Dr. Alexander Maclaren).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. When before this had a ruler of Judea sought to shift responsibility by having a Herod examine his prisoner? When did Peter have a vision, and how did he obey it? When did Philip have a vision, and what was the result of his obedience to it?

Felix is Deposed. The reasons why the rule of Felix was so short are given by Conybeare and Howson. The political situation in Judea grew more embarrassing. The exasperation of the people under the maladministration of Felix became increasingly implacable. It was during Paul's two years' imprisonment that such serious disturbances took place in the streets of Cæsarea between the Jewish and Gentile population, that the troops were called out, and slaughter resulted. The troops, which were chiefly recruited in the province, fraternized with the Gentile population, while the Jews trusted chiefly to the influence of wealth. In the end Felix was summoned to Rome, and the Jews followed with their accusations. Thus it was that Felix was anxious, even at his departure, "to confer obligations upon them," and one effort to diminish his unpopularity was to leave Paul in bonds. In so doing he doubtless violated the law, and trifled with the rights of a Roman citizen; but the favor of the provincial Jews he needed, and the Christians were weak in comparison with them; nor were such delays in the administration of justice unprecedented, either at Rome or in the provinces. Nero deposed Felix and appointed Festus.

Festus, the New Procurator. Festus was more honorable than Felix. One interesting event of his rule was his troubles over a high wall which the Jews built so that Agrippa, the proconsul, could not look into the temple courts from his palace

windows. The wall hid the courts also from the guard stationed in the Tower of Antonia during the festivals. Festus agreed with Agrippa that the wall must come down, but he allowed the Jews to carry the matter to Rome, and through the influence of Nero's wife they won their case.

Paul's Appeal to Rome. Upon reaching Jerusalem, Festus was met by the chief priests and leading Jews who besought him as a favor to them to send for Paul. Their plan was to kill Paul on the way, but Festus told them they could go to Cæsarea and make their charges. A few days later Paul and his enemies appeared in Cæsarea before the procurator. Paul declared, as he had to Felix, that neither against the law of the Jews nor against the temple nor against Cæsar had he sinned. But when Festus, for the sake of gaining the favor of the Jews, asked him if he would go to Jerusalem to be judged there before him, Paul, knowing what judgment he would receive in that event, boldly declared that he appealed to Cæsar. Although Jews had appealed against deeds of Roman officers, this was the first time that a Jew had appealed to the highest court of the realm against other Jews. Unless the prisoner was proved guilty of brigandage or sedition, the provincial government had no choice in the matter, the prisoner must be sent on to Rome for trial. Festus therefore made the only reply possible when he said, "Unto Cæsar shalt thou go."

Festus Presents Paul's Case to Agrippa. Before Paul could be sent to Rome, Agrippa and his sister Bernice came to greet the new governor of Judea. Festus reported Paul's case to him, and Agrippa expressed a desire to hear Paul. It was not a new trial that Paul faced the next day. Rather was it an interesting entertainment for the princely guest and the principal men of Cæsarea, both Jewish and Gentile. King Agrippa, as Professor William Lyon Phelps aptly says, "was what Bernard Shaw would call a rubber-stamp king; his was an empty title, for he had little power." Festus declared before them all that he had not found Paul worthy of death, and he did not know what charges to make when sending him as a prisoner to Rome, and he hoped Agrippa, after examining Paul, would help him in this little detail.

"Thou art permitted to speak for thyself," Agrippa said to Paul, and Paul made the most of his opportunity. It was his last public testimony in Palestine.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

For two whole years Paul was a prisoner at Cæsarea. There his life was in no danger. Cæsarea was heathenism in all its glory at the very door of the true religion! "Yes," writes Dr. George Adam Smith, "but the contrast might be reversed. It was justice and freedom in the most fanatical and turbulent province of the world. In seeking reparation from his people and an open door to the West, Herod had secured more benefits for a nobler cause than his own."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"Happy is that teacher," exclaims Dr. J. Stuart Holden, "who, like Paul, can point to his own life as an incarnation of his teaching, and who is not afraid to remind those who know him well of 'my ways which be in Christ'! For consistency is by far the largest part of any man's commendation of the gospel to others, and no man blesses his generation more fully than does he who shows irrefutably that the gospel he proclaims is *livable*."

"Happy is the teacher who is not afraid of the hearer turning from the message to the messenger!" exclaims Dr. J. H. Jowett. "I looked at a florist's shop the other day and I saw many packets of seeds. In the middle of the window there was an exquisitely beautiful plant in flower, and attached to it were these words, 'Grown from our seed.' I say, thrice blessed is the servant of God who, when he has been commending the seed of the Word, can point to an evident experience as confirmation of its power and grace."

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS MISSION

Beginning the Lesson. Begin with The Historical Background.

The twenty-sixth chapter of The Acts is one of the chapters of the Bible which Ruskin's mother had him commit to memory, whereby, as Ruskin says, she estab-

lished his soul in righteousness. It is well worth committing, for it contains the finest address in The Acts, the best account that we have of the great apostle's relation to his mission, and it is dignified, sincere, skillful, and persuasive. It is called Paul's *apologia pro vita sua,* his defense of his life, but Paul is not pleading in fear of his life; he shows, indeed, that he is not a criminal, that he has done nothing worthy of death, but he does so in defending Christianity as being not contrary to earlier divine revelation, but a fulfillment of that revelation, a culmination of all past promises.

Paul's Vehemence. Festus thought Paul was crazy, probably because Paul got excited. As the prisoner spoke on and on, his eyes flashed and his voice became surcharged with feeling. There was a fire in him which a cold-blooded man like Festus could not understand. To tepid-blooded people, enthusiasts are always an enigma. Paul was a man who could burn with fervent heat. He was a volcano of a man and his words sometimes flowed like molten lava. He could write letters whose paragraphs blazed like leaping tongues of flame. There are sentences from his lips which still glow like burning coals, uncooled by the snows of nineteen hundred winters. By nature he was impulsive, precipitate, vehement. It was his way to plunge into things headlong. He could not do things by halves. When he started on a course which he believed to be right, he was fiery, implacable and irresistible.—Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

The Moral Power of Paul's Speech. After describing his astounding experience in words quick with dramatic quality and tense with feeling, Paul cried out, "Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Suddenly all that is strange vanishes and something very familiar appears. You have here the challenging summons of duty, a man's facing of the demand while destiny waits, and then his response to the demand. Every hearer felt a thrill at Paul's words. Here was a man who took his highest ideals seriously. Here was a man who put his noblest purpose in command of his life. Here was a man who obeyed divine behests with complete and persistent loyalty. Agrippa might feel some bewilderment about the mighty voice which had spoken on the way to Damascus, but he had no doubt about the voice which had spoken to his own soul. In some dim but real personal way he had had an equivalent of Paul's sense of divine compulsion.

Every man has some sort of heavenly vision. What had Agrippa done with his? Had he obeyed it? Had he turned from it? Had he evaded it? The curious quality of moral power in Paul's speech lay in this. He made every person who listened think of the deepest moral summons he had ever felt, and a flush of shame rose unbidden to his cheek if he had failed to meet the demand. Paul had responded to life's supreme call. The air was electric with that consciousness, and in that hour every man had a sudden flash of moral self-revelation. Paul's words were like the touch of Ithuriel's spear.—Dr. Lynn H. Hough, in The Christian Advocate.

Not Disobedient unto the Heavenly Vision. No force of argument or casuistry could drive Paul from the conviction that Jesus had indeed spoken to him from the heavens. Grace had met him and he knew it.

And as I look into the pages of human experience I find a thousand stories to corroborate Paul's story. A young girl listens to a strange preacher in a Norwich meeting-house, and weeps, she scarce knows why; grace met her that day, and all the world reveres the name of Elizabeth Fry. A wild seaman, in the depths of his sin, hears the appealing voice of Jesus; his name is John Newton, and it is he who writes the sweetest hymn upon the grace of God the world possesses. And the secret in each case is the same; grace met Saul of Tarsus, and Elizabeth Fry, and John Newton, and each appropriated the grace. They were not disobedient.—Dr. W. J. Dawson, in The Evangelistic Note.

The Purpose of the Vision. Why did Jesus Christ call Paul? It was not to save his soul, but to make him a minister to others. Christ does not call people to stop them in wrongdoing, but to start them in rightdoing. He wants your intense natures, regal intellects, virility, strength, enthusiasm; not to blot you out, but to fulfill you. Being a Christian does not mean suppression, but expansion and transformation. You can only live the life you were meant to live, and your faculties can only reach their highest, as they are devoted to their lawful King, and given up to the highest service.—Charles Brown.

Visions Must Be Obeyed. Luther saw a vision of a church free from corrupt ecclesiasticism, of every man going to the original fountain for his spiritual drink, of every man worshiping according to the dictates of his own conscience. The

dream, the vision, the inspiration of religious freedom swept over his soul and he defied crowned heads, and mitered heads and the very powers of the air, so intent was he on being obedient to that vision which had enlightened him, rejoiced him, and now controlled all his splendid manhood and commanding genius.

Hundreds are toiling today for reforms that seem well nigh hopeless, because they must. A vision of duty is ever with them. A vision of the world's wants and pain and sorrow haunts them. God has revealed to many a man that he must help to make the world better. Blessed is he, if he is obedient. Woe, woe to him if he is disobedient to the vision.

You have had visions! Deny it not! To your soul there was revealed something far better than the present condition. You saw where you might serve men and serve God. You saw where your own life might be purified and your character ennobled. Every nerve of your nobler self was set vibrating like the strings of the Eolian harp when the wind sweeps over it. Perhaps you were alone when the vision came, and you forgot it when you passed out among men. Perhaps you were sitting in church, and as the preacher spoke of duty, of possibility, of responsibility, or reward, the vision flashed before you and you said, "Yes, Lord, I will," and the vision passed away again when you went home and began to dicker about the trifles of life. Oh, what visions have come? But you were disobedient to them.—Condensed from an Article by Myron W. Haynes, in the Homiletic Review.

I Would that All Might Become Such as I Am. Renan calls Paul proud, unbending, self-assertive. Many of his words taken by themselves without the context in which they belong do sound self-righteous. When, however, we consider the causes that led to the self-assertions, we find them justifiable and necessary. "I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles," he wrote to the Corinthians. Does this sound egotistical? But he is not boasting of himself, he is trying to clear himself of the charges made to the Corinthians that their leader was a second-rate apostle, and he is doing this that his message may have its due weight as coming from one who knew whereof he spoke. At a fitting time he declares himself the chiefest of sinners, but that was not the time. "I would that not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds," were his words to King Agrippa. Agrippa's worldly position with all its pomp and splendor was as naught compared with Paul's spiritual knowledge and perfect trust, and well might he wish for others the same great peace and hope that was his.

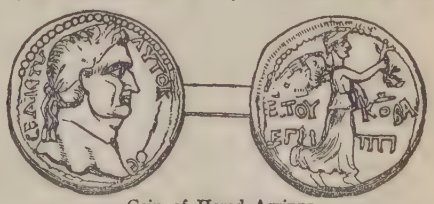
For Discussion. 1. Paul as an orator.

2. Paul's vehemence. See Chapter XI of The Character of Paul, by Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Why was Paul so calm and confident? 2. Does the hour make the leader, or does the crisis reveal him? 3. How may one be prepared to weather the storms of life? 4. What loads are unnecessary freightage on life's voyage?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
OBEDIENCE TO THE HEAVENLY VISION

Beginning the Lesson. Toward the audience chamber of the Roman governor in Cæsarea a crowd is hastening. Here comes Festus, the governor, and with him are King Agrippa and the Princess Bernice, all resplendent in royal robes. Festus is clad in scarlet, Agrippa in royal purple, a golden circlet about his forehead, and Bernice flashes with jewels. The chief captains and a retinue of soldiers follow, their helmets, coats of mail and shields and spears glittering as they take their stand behind the gilded chairs where the governor and his distinguished guests have been seated. After them come chief citizens of the city.



Coin of Herod Agrippa

Soon a man is led in chained, and all eyes are turned upon him. Festus states who the prisoner is, what the charges against him are, his opinion that he is innocent, and his wish to learn from an examination before the king what he shall write to the Roman Emperor to whom the

prisoner has asked to be sent for trial. King Agrippa stretches forth his hand in sign that the prisoner shall speak, and Paul makes his great defense. What does he say? (Continue with Text Explained.)

The Vision which Comes to You. Remember that the heavenly vision comes in very humble and everyday forms, not in visits of angels or light flashing down from the skies. It comes in the simple guise of duty; the thing which you ought to do today, and which you know that you ought to do. That is the heavenly vision of the moment. You are to give up that sin, you are to undertake that bit of work for others, you are to break from certain habits and companionships. That is what God says to you at the moment. You are sure of it. It is the vision that you have to follow—follow it!—J. G. Greenhough.

Visions that All Have and Should Obey. One day Isaiah went into the temple at Jerusalem, and while there he seemed to see a vision. It was as though all the walls melted away in flame and glory, and there in the midst of the glory was the Throne of God with the mighty, winged angels all around. And as Isaiah stood there he heard a Voice; and the Voice was telling of the evil things in the life of the world which called for somebody to set them right for God, and the Voice said, "Whom shall I send?"

Then presently the vision vanished, and Isaiah stood face to face with the courts and walls and towers of the temple standing there just as they had stood before.

What had happened? Just what happens to every boy and man who keeps watch in his heart to see what God will show him. Sometimes God comes to people in visions, as he did to Isaiah. But not often. Generally God does not show himself to our eyes, but he shows his will to our conscience, and that is enough.

Every one of us, man or boy, can have things happen to him just as important as that which happened to Isaiah that day in the temple. All of a sudden we see things we never saw before. We may have gone along doing certain things and following certain habits which we never thought much about and just picked up because somebody else influenced us. And then some day when we are in the midst of the old, familiar surroundings, all at once we see them in a new light. We wake up to understand that the habit we have been slipping into thoughlessly is making us less manly, less self-controlled, less like the men God's Spirit would have us be. We realize of a sudden the chances we are letting slip to make our lives strong and sweet, and to make the big life we share with other men and boys stronger and sweeter because we have touched it. The awakening may come in church; it may come when we are talking with another boy we admire; it may come when we are off by ourselves and something makes us think straighter than usual; it may come on the athletic field or in any other familiar every-day place where we see a fine action done or hear a brave ringing word spoken, and we wonder if we could have done that. No matter where the experience comes or what form it takes, if it makes us see that our life and all the life of our friends we share in might be finer and better than it is, if it gives us a glimpse of what a great, high, glorious thing it is to live the kind of life that God holds up before every right-souled boy and man, then we have had our vision of God just as Isaiah had his long ago; and our souls have stood in the presence of God's splendor which will help us, if we will, to make our own lives splendid too.—Dr. Walter Russell Bowie, in Sunny Windows.

Visions like that of Joan of Arc. When Joan of Arc was thirteen years old, a wonderful thing happened. She was walking in her father's garden, and she seemed to hear a Voice. "It seemed," she said, "to come from lips that I should reverence. I believe it was sent me from God. When I heard it for the third time, I recognized that it was the Voice of an Angel. This Voice has always guided me well and I have always understood it; it instructed me to be good and to go often to church."

Then one day her Voices told her that it was she who must save France. She was only a girl, and her father could not believe that she could help save France, and the neighbors laughed and tried to keep her back. But there was a brave knight, named Robert de Baudricourt, who lived at Vaucouleurs, and thither to him Joan went. He gave her a suit of armor, and men to protect her, and sent her on her way toward that part of France which was most troubled by the war.

The old King of France was dead, and the Dauphin, his son, had never yet been crowned, because all kings of France were crowned at Rheims, and to Rheims he could not go, since the enemies blocked the way. Joan rode to Chinon, where the Dauphin was; and there in a great room in the castle she picked him out from among all the others round him because her Voices told her which was he. At first the Dauphin and all his friends were disposed to make a mock of the idea of

a peasant girl coming to deliver France; but after they had seen Joan, and looked into her eyes, they did not laugh any more. The Dauphin rallied all the knights and soldiers who were faithful to him, and he made Joan of Arc the head of his army. In her armor and on her white horse, with a banner embroidered with lilies, she rode out to the war to save France. Presently, she had delivered the City of Orleans from the foe. She opened the way to Rheims, and carried the Dauphin there to be crowned. It seemed that she would deliver all France, and the people rejoiced on every side.

Then, at last, she was wounded and betrayed. She fell into the hands of the enemies of France. They put her in prison, and accused her of false things. And, at last, they put her to death in the market square at Rouen, on a spot which people go and look at reverently to this day.

They put her body to death, but they could not destroy her spirit. Still it lives in the world to make thousands of men and women more pure and brave and true.

Would it not be a beautiful thing if there were many girls in every time like Joan of Arc? They would not ride at the head of armies, as she did, for God's work is not the same for every one. But all girls can be like her in these two things:

1. They can try to listen for the Voice of God;
2. And they can love their country, and try to make it better because they have lived.

Who will be the Joan of Arcs today? The girls who from the beginning of their lives are remembering the poor, and cheering the sad, and going out of their way to be good to those whom others forget. Girls like these will grow into the women who serve their country as Joan of Arc served hers. They will be remembering the people who live in the slums of the cities, and trying to see to it that the places shall be made better where they live. They will be quick to take the part of all women and children against whom some wrong is being done. They will be patriots, because they will be thinking, not of themselves only nor of their own little circle of friends only, but of all troubled people whose champions they can be.

Such girls follow in the footsteps of Joan of Arc. And they follow in the footsteps also of that Greater One, in whose name it was said, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."—Condensed from Sunny Windows, by Dr. W. R. Bowie.

Obedience is very Simple. To obey means to go and do as you are bid. We are followers of Christ, and we have one thing to do—obey his words. He says to us, just as he said to his disciples in Galilee, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

I Would that All Might Become Such as I am. Paul was like his Lord. I was told a simple incident of one of the great Christian men of our generation. He was at the head of one of the largest concerns of our country employing thousands of men but never knowing any labor troubles. This incident was told by his son. The two were on the train together. The father rose and went forward to another part of the train. As he went a man sitting opposite came over and spoke to the son. His flashy manner of dress, and the fact that he seemed to have been drinking suggested the sort of man he was. He said to the son: "Wasn't that Mr. ——?" "Yes," the son replied. "Well," the man said, as though talking half to himself, "if there were more men like him there'd be fewer like me." And he returned to his seat and sat as though absorbed in his thought. The son in speaking of it after his father's death, said it was one of the tenderest memories he had of his father. The common crowd of the street and our Lord Jesus are united in one thing, they want more men like Jesus our Savior, then there'd be fewer of the other sort.—Dr. S. D. Gordon, in The Crowned Christ.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. By the grace of God I am what I am.—Paul.

The spirit of obedience is best seen, often, in fidelity to the littles.—Dr. Henry Churchill King.

For much obedience, too, is Light,
And following that is finding Him.—Lowell.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Read the entire twenty-seventh chapter of The Acts. 2. Read Psalm 107.23-30. 3. Locate Crete and Malta. 4. What was Paul's official position on shipboard? What was his real position? 5. Why did Paul the prisoner become the leader? 6. What qualities did Paul show on this voyage?

PAUL'S VOYAGE AND SHIPWRECK

GOLDEN TEXT: Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. Matthew 14.27

LESSON Acts 27.1-44 DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 107.23-32

REFERENCE MATERIAL 2 Corinthians 11.23-28

ACTS 27.30 And as the sailors were seeking to flee out of the ship, and had lowered the boat into the sea, under color as though they would lay out anchors from the foreship, 31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. 32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. 33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take some food, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye wait and continue fasting, having taken nothing. 34 Wherefore I beseech you to take some food: for this is for your safety: for there shall not a hair perish from the head of any of you. 35 And when he had said this, and had taken bread, he gave thanks to God in the presence of all; and he brake it, and began to eat. 36 Then were they all of good cheer, and themselves also took food. 37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. 38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. 39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they perceived a certain bay with a beach, and they took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon it. 40 And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders; and hoisting up the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. 41 But lighting upon a place where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the foreship struck and remained immovable, but the stern began to break up by the violence *of the waves.* 42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any *of them* should swim out and escape. 43 But the centurion, desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose; and commanded that they who could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to the land; 44 And the rest, some on planks, and some on *other* things from the ship. And so it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to the land.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. PAUL FRUSTRATES THE SAILORS' PLOT, verses 30-32. Read the Historical Background. The sailors under pretense of throwing out anchors from the foreship had lowered the small boat, and Paul was the only one who perceived their intention of making their escape in it. Paul told the centurion and soldiers of the sailors' plan, and warned them that without the sailors the ship could not be managed and all would perish. The soldiers promptly settled the matter by cutting the ropes that held the boat and letting her drift away.

"This enthusiast, fanatic and dreamer, as most men called him, this visionary and impractical idealist, as most men deemed him, proved to be the most shrewd, cool-headed, clear-sighted man on board when the extreme danger put them all on trial. He had learned to keep his eyes open, his mind steady, and his pulses calm. It is not so much skill that avails in hours of peril, but the unshaken nerve, the steady hand, the heart that beats evenly, the courage that rises to the occasion. He was sure of himself because sure of his God" (J. G. Greenhough).

II. PAUL'S MINISTRY OF HEARTENING, verses 33-38. Morning was near at hand and Paul urged all to take food. In their danger and despair they had scarcely eaten for a fortnight, and Paul told them it was necessary for them to eat, assuring them that none of them should perish.

"Paul was the only man in all that worried shipload who was confident. Ah, God's voice was familiar to him! He had learned to know it in the calm, and so recognized it in the storm. Consciously or unconsciously, we are preparing our souls against the emergency. They who walk with God in the sunshine and the garden will not lose him in the storm or on the desert" (Robert Freeman).

Paul's example as well as his words gave them fresh courage, and they took food. There were two hundred and seventy-six persons on board.

"It is this splendid combination of faith and common sense that excites our admiration. This is typical Christianity. Christian Science, which refuses to use medicine for disease and surgical treatment for wounds, is just as much anti-Christian as the materialism which denies the power of mind over matter and of God over events. The one lacks common sense, the other lacks faith. Living Christianity combines both. Paul reveals both in the highest measure" (R. C. Gillie).

The ship's cargo was wheat, and this they now threw overboard to lighten the ship. Earlier in the storm they had cast over other freight and the tackling of the ship.

There are many things of value in themselves which nevertheless handicap one in the voyage of life. What not to do is often of as great importance as what to do, wise neglect as much a factor in success as brave performance. He is a wise man who has learned to attend to the things which matter and to neglect the rest.

III. SHIPWRECKED BUT SAVED, verses 38-44. When day dawned they saw before them a bay with a sandy beach, and they determined to drive the ship upon

the beach, if possible. It was the island of Malta which Alexandrian ships were wont to visit at the harbor of Valleta, but the sailors did not recognize it. They cut off the anchors, freed the rudders from their fastenings, and hoisted the foresail.

"Better lose the anchor than the whole ship" (a Dutch proverb).

The ship moved forward, but was caught at the meeting of two seas. Her bow was firmly held in the mud, and her stern was broken up by the force of the waves.

The soldiers were answerable with their own lives for the safekeeping of the prisoners. You recall that Herod ordered the death of the guards of the prison from which Peter made his escape, Acts 12.19, and that the jailor was on the point of killing himself when the earthquake occurred and he thought that Paul and Silas and the other prisoners had escaped, Acts 16.27. Therefore the soldiers now counseled that all the prisoners be put to death, lest any of them should escape upon reaching land, but the centurion, wishing to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose. "Paul, of course, occupied a very different position from the other prisoners. He was a man of distinction. The others had been in all probability condemned to death, and were going to supply the perpetual demand which Rome made on the provinces for human victims to amuse the populace by their death in the arena" (Professor Ramsay). The centurion ordered all to save themselves as best they could. The swimmers reached shore first, and helped the rest who, by clinging to planks and other wreckage, also landed safely. So it was that "not a hair perished from the head of any of them." Paul was to see Rome.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. What trials has Paul met before this? In what times of peril has he been of good cheer?. In what times of perplexity has he been guided by God?

From Cæsarea to Fair Havens. After the hearing before Agrippa, Festus gave Paul and certain other prisoners into the charge of a centurion named Julius to be taken to Rome. A ship from Adramyttium was about to make the return voyage to the coast of Asia Minor, and Julius took passage with his prisoners. Luke and Aristarchus of Thessalonica were with Paul. The ship stopped at Sidon, where Julius kindly allowed Paul to see his friends, and then crossed over to Cyprus and, sailing around the eastward end of the island, went northwestward to the Province of Lycia. Its harbor was a great port for ships from Egypt and Syria. They were fortunate in finding there a ship from Alexandria that was bound directly for Italy, and they sailed with it.

The wind was unfavorable, and it took them many days to reach Cnidus, the southwestern point of Asia Minor, and not being able to cross the Ægean Sea to Greece, as they should have done, they turned southward to Crete. Sailing along the southern shore of that island, they succeeded with difficulty in reaching Fair Havens, where they waited for a change of wind.

An Ancient Mediterranean Ship

After a tedious delay the question of continuing the voyage was discussed. The season for navigation lasted from September fourteenth to November eleventh, and then all navigation on the open sea ceased until March, we are told. "The ship reached Fair Havens in the latter part of September, and was detained there by a continuance of unfavorable winds until October fifth." Paul advised them not to start out again, for he knew a voyage would be attended by great danger to the ship and to their lives. But the harbor was not a good one in which to pass the winter, the captain and the owner of the ship were anxious to reach Phœnix and winter there, and the centurion naturally paid more heed to their advice than to Paul's. It was decided to sail for Phœnix.

"Neither the captain nor the centurion resented Paul's advice, but they thought that they knew better," writes Mr. P. Whitwell Wilson. "The captain wanted his profit on the lading. He was ready for a gamble. Nor was he deterred by the peril of other lives than his own. He was an employer who neglected safety appliances. He had no life-belts and only one life-boat on board. His motive was commerce, and where the telescope pointed to prudence, to the fear of God, which is the beginning even of industrial wisdom, he applied his blind eye."

The Dangerous Voyage from Fair Havens. When the northwest wind which had kept the ship at Fair Havens gave place to a gentle south wind, they set sail, expecting to reach Phœnix in a few hours. But the wind suddenly changed and the ship could not face the violent northeast gale that blew down against it from over the high mountains of Crete, which towered above them to the height of seven thousand feet. They were obliged to give way to the wind and allow it to drive them from their course. Running under the shelter of the small island of Cauda, they managed there to hoist on board the small boat they had been towing, and to pass strong cables around the ship's hull to prevent its timbers from starting, at the same time lowering all the unnecessary rigging or perhaps throwing out weights to retard the progress of the ship toward the dangerous quicksands off the African coast. The storm grew worse, and the next day they threw out part of the freight; on the third day the heavier tackling of the ship was flung overboard. Not a glimpse of the sun could be had nor was a star visible, and the sailors could not tell where they were; food could scarcely be prepared and no one cared for it, crew and passengers were only waiting for the ship to sink, for they had lost all hope of being saved. Then Paul reminded them that he had warned them against sailing from Crete, and now he had another message for them; and he exhorted them to be of good cheer, telling them of the vision he had had and of the assurance that no life should be lost, although they would be cast on an island—for he must stand before Cæsar, and God had granted him all those that sailed with him. The promise had come from God, whose he was and whom he served, and he believed God's promises.

About midnight on the fourteenth night from Fair Havens, repeated soundings

showed that they were approaching land. Fearing they might be dashed against rocks, they threw out the anchors to wait for daylight.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Fair Havens, whence the ship set sail, was a harbor near the center of the southern shore of the island of Crete, a little east of Cape Matala, the most conspicuous headland on the coast. Phœnix, the port to which the ship was bound, was a few hours' sail away to the west, the best harbor on the southern coast of Crete. The island of Cauda was about twenty-five miles south of Phœnix.

Ancient Ship Anchored by the Stern

Melita, now called Malta, is a British island near the middle of the Mediterranean, two hundred miles from the African coast, sixty miles from the island of Sicily. By referring to the Maltese cross and the "Knights of Malta," recall the part played by Malta in the Crusades.

The name of "St. Paul's Bay" has been given to the inlet on the north side of the island where it is believed the shipwreck occurred. It is spoken of as "the place where two seas met," and south of the small island of Salmonetta two currents, one from the east and the other from the north, meet where the ship was run aground. The probable course of the ship and place of shipwreck are shown on our diagram. Five miles away was the capital of the island, now known as Citta Vechia, Old City. Here there is a cathedral which the priests claim is built on the site of the house of Publius, and there is a cave shown to credulous tourists as the abode of Paul while on the island.

For the Blackboard. Paul's Journey to Rome. Imprisonment at Cæsarea, Sidon, Myra, Cnidus, Fair Havens, Melita.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

It was when all hope of their being saved was taken away that the sailors let the ship drift. So it is in all undertakings. While our hope holds, we steer; when all hope is gone, we drift. Recall the experience of Captain Scott and his heroic men in their search for the South Pole. As long as their hope held out their journals tell of most heroic advance in spite of terribly adverse conditions, but when they came within sight of the spot and saw Amundsen's flag flying there, and learned that to him belonged the glory, they could strive no longer. Have you put on the helmet of hope?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE CHRISTIAN OVERCOMING ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES

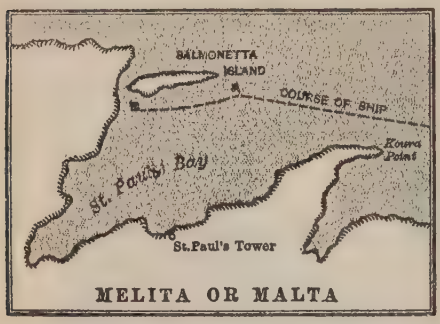
Beginning the Lesson. On the morning of the Battle of Copenhagen it was the twenty-seventh chapter of Acts which Lord Nelson read for his daily Bible portion. Later in the day the currents prevented his getting his battleships into the position he wished. Then there flashed into his mind what was done on the ship on which Paul sailed on that memorable voyage to Rome: "Fearing lest haply we should be cast ashore on rocky ground, they let go four anchors from the stern and wished for the day." Lord Nelson resolved to follow that example. He ordered anchors cast out of the stern of his ship. When this was done, the ship swung about as was purposed, the Danish fleet was destroyed in the roadstead, and a great victory was won.

Our lesson text begins with the ship on which Paul was sailing waiting for the dawn. What had happened earlier on that voyage?

Who was Right, Paul or the Captain of the Ship? The centurion believed the master of the ship more than those things which were spoken by Paul. The captain of the ship predicted fair weather and urged an early clearance. Paul, the

prisoner and passenger, foretold angry seas and advised remaining in shelter. The centurion believed the captain of the ship. But Paul was right; the captain was wrong; and the ship was lost.

Sooner or later, all life resolves itself into a desperation for human credence between Paul and the captain of the ship. The point is that the captain of the ship is the man who might be supposed to know. He is a specialist. And Paul sets over against his nautical erudition the unsatisfying word, "I perceive." It is a case of Reason on the one hand and Revelation on the other; and the centurion pins his faith to the vigilant captain rather than to the visionary Paul. That is the exact point at which the world has always missed its way. Visit the melancholy sites of Edom and Babylon, of Tyre and Sidon, of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Greece and Rome, and everywhere, on crumbling pillar and broken arch, seeing eyes may discern these significant words, deeply graven on the ruins that are splendid even in decay, "They believed the captain of the ship." These magnificent empire-builders of yesterday scouted the nebulous perceptions of the prophets, and they fell. National shipwreck always comes along that line.



MELITA OR MALTA

Clearly the captain of the ship is unreliable. In a world like this, on which so many worlds depend, it would be the climax of misfortune if the captain of the ship had it all his own way. There are visions, perceptions, revelations. God speaks from without. He speaks plainly, so that wayfaring men may not err. Happily, the Lord of the Pilgrims does not leave his Christians and Hopefuls to find the way to the Celestial City as best they may. There are the "things spoken by Paul." The only way of avoiding shipwreck in Church and in State is clearly to pay good heed to them.—Condensed from the Luggage of Life, by F. W. Boreham.

Driven Up and Down in Adria. There is a sense in which we moderns may be driven up and down in Adria, and that is as the sport of circumstance and subjects of distracting care. To only a limited extent can we control our circumstances, or limit our social liabilities. All sorts of exactions are demanded, and interruptions to our normal work offered. There are plenty of people who are willing to spend our time for us, and find numberless things for us to do. All this demands nervous reserve, mental poise, emotional stability, and protracted patience. The spirit that is "driven" need not be rudderless, waterlogged, or go unpiloted. It is possible even to run before the wind awhile and later beat for one's own port. No one can keep invariably to a direct course from port to port, and even the transatlantic steam monsters roll and pitch in some kinds of weather.

The great need, then, is for adaptation to circumstances where advantage may be gained by adjustment, with inflexible and resolute adherence to a chosen course. The Christian man must never forget where he is going, or cease his efforts to keep as closely as possible to the "great circles" of a heavenly charting, and the navigating principles of a divine direction. Adria after all is only a transition stage. The storms will finally sink into calm, and the tides turn God's way. Let us keep up our courage as did Paul, and by and by our clearance will come.—Editorial in Zion's Herald.

Worth While. "So," says Luke—through tempest and storm and darkness and shipwreck and the danger of death—"we came to Rome."

And along similar perilous ways God leads his people still. Whether we say that our goal is a holy character or heaven at the last, we have a dangerous road to tread. "In the world," said our Lord, "ye shall have tribulation." Bunyan was never truer to life than when in picturing the journey of Christian from the City of Destruction to the City Celestial he set the Slough of Despond, and Hill Difficulty, and the Valley of Humiliation, and Vanity Fair, and the Dungeon of Doubting Castle all on the road; when he peopled the way with terrible and fierce foes like Apollyon and Giant Despair. It is a perilous way, the Christian life, and whoso walks it must go armed.

All of which is true to experience. There is no easy way to goodness. There is

no primrose path to purity. We have to fight daily and hourly for honor and for faith.

"We climb the steep ascent of heaven
Through peril, toil, and pain."

Every young person in shop or office, intent upon wearing the white flower of the blameless life, knows the truth of this. Every man of business resolved to buy and sell to the glory of God knows the truth of this. The narrow way is also a dangerous way. And it is so, and so only—by walking this dangerous way—we come to our Rome. For it leads to life.

But Rome was reached, and Rome was worth it. Indeed, Paul would have traveled a still longer road, and endured still more tedious delays, and faced still more deadly dangers, in order to enjoy the opportunities which Rome offered.

And that is how we shall feel when our Rome is reached. It is worth while to fight and struggle in order to win a pure and Christian character; it is worth while to face contempt and scorn to hear the "Well done" of our Lord. Do you imagine that Christian and Hopeful cared for what they had endured upon the road when they found themselves within the gates of the city and clothed with that raiment that shone like gold, and when they heard the bells of the city ring and heard the voice saying, "Enter ye into the joy of the Lord"? Nor shall we care when our Rome is reached. Our road is a roundabout, tedious, dangerous road. But what does the road matter as long as we arrive?—Dr. J. D. Jones, in The Christian World.

The Source of Paul's Serenity. Surely it was that fellowship with God which no storm nor discomfort could impair that gave Paul his serenity. He never forgot that he was the property and servant of God—"Whose I am, and whom I serve." The angels of his Father's Presence-Chamber were beside him by day and night. He was able to give thanks amid circumstances that seemed likely to paralyze serenity and faith. He interceded for his fellow-passengers, and obtained the assurance of their safety. We can see him casting himself into the surf as a child flings itself into its mother's arms. Ship, sea, and land were attached to the Unseen by that ladder which Jacob saw, and which is let down to each of us in whatever scenes we find ourselves. "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed!"—Dr. F. B. Meyer.

The Blessing of Adverse Circumstances. Human life is a voyage, but our Heavenly Father does not give us the control of the weather. If he did we should be apt to choose nothing but smooth seas, fair winds, full cargoes, and secure harbors. God is wiser than we are, and he no more consults us than I consult my grass-plot as to when I shall use the mower, or my grapevines whether I shall prune away the surplus branches.

On a certain night we are told that Christ Jesus directed his disciples to cross the lake of Galilee. He knew that a storm was coming, but he did not tell them. They found it out for themselves before they had gone very far; and Peter, who was an "old hand" on that lake, had never known a rougher night or an angrier sea. The wind was right in their teeth, and the waves hammered the bow of their fishing smack like iron sledges. With all their sturdy pulls at the oars, they made but little headway. They were learning some lessons that night; and so are some of my readers who are now passing through storms of trouble and are enveloped by the darkness of a mysterious Providence. They are learning the blessings of head-winds, and what spiritual help they bring to us.

Prosperity very often breeds self-conceit in a Christian, in a church, and in a nation. We take to ourselves the credit. When we are "hard up" we are apt to call upon God for what we need; when we have got it, we are equally apt to set it down to our own skill or our own seamanship. We ignore God and set up a will and choose a way of our own. He is too wise and too loving to allow this, and he often sends a stiff gale into our faces for our chastisement and correction. Whom he loveth he chasteneth; the self-willed and the rebellious are left to go on the rocks.

Headwinds strengthen the sinews and develop strong characters. Many of our Americans who have attained to the highest work of honor and usefulness were "seasoned" in their youth by sharp adversity. As Joseph was prepared by a pit and a prison for the premiership of Egypt, so Abraham Lincoln was educated for his high calling by severe study of a few books in a log cabin, and by eating the tonic bread of a laborious poverty. If he had been born in the brownstone mansion of a great city and reared in luxury, his biography would have read very differently, and perhaps history might never have heard of him.

Adversity brings out the graces and the beauties of the noblest Christian character. Ah, I suspect that when in another world we examine the chart of our voy-

agings, we shall discover that the headwinds—trying at the time—gave us the most headway toward Heaven.

The crowning blessing of all adverse experiences is that they teach us our utter dependence on God. Danger sends us to our knees. The hour of our extremity is the hour of God's opportunity. When the disciples were at the very crisis of the storm, lo! the welcome form of Jesus appeared on the waves, and the welcome voice of Jesus was heard through the tempest, "It is I: be of good cheer; be not afraid." As soon as he set foot in the boat the tornado hushed into a calm. Dear friends, you may find that it is a blessed wind that brings Christ to you. Welcome him into your vessel. No craft ever foundered with Christ on board. No struggling soul, no afflicted Christian, no sorely tried church has ever gone down when once the Son of God has come to their relief. The fiercest headwinds and the angriest waves obey his voice; and so will he bring you at last into your desired haven.—Condensed from an Article by Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler.

For Discussion. The ascendency of mind and character.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What encouragement did Paul receive on the way to Rome? 2. Do great men need sympathy and encouragement? 3. What did Paul accomplish while in Rome? 4. What was Luke's purpose in writing The Acts, and in what way can it be said to have a logical ending? 5. What is your estimate of the man Paul?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
PAUL'S LEADERSHIP

Beginning the Lesson. During the War some one told this story in the New York Times. When one of the transports went over, the chaplain, finding a group of men sitting together on the deck with nothing to do, began to tell them stories. He just told them for their value as tales. He told the story of Paul's shipwreck and those fourteen days in a typhoon when he was making his famous voyage to Rome. When he had finished, a man called out to him, "Who was that guy?" The story-teller replied that it was a man named Paul. The soldier went below and aroused his bunkie. "The chaplain was telling us a story up on deck about a fellow named Paul, and he was *some* man."

That is the impression which Paul has always made upon us, in whatever circumstances we have seen him placed. He was a great man. He was a man of God. In this twenty-seventh chapter of Acts which we study today we see him as a wonderful leader.

This chapter gives us the best information that we have concerning ancient seamanship. The personal pronoun *we* shows that Luke was with Paul. Luke loved the sea, and he gives a very graphic account of the voyage. Why did the centurion start from Cæsarea with his prisoners on a coasting vessel? Follow with The Historical Background.

Why Paul was Able to Lead. Whether one is ready for the hour of opportunity or emergency depends on the whole previous life, and the real testing time is not the critical moment itself, but all the apparently unimportant moments which precede it. The hour reveals, but does not make, the man. David was able to save the armies of Israel because he had learned to use his sling in his shepherd life. It was General Charles James Napier who said, "The smith who has to look for his hammer when the iron is red strikes too late; the hammer should be uplifted to fall like a thunderbolt while the white heat is in the metal."

The greatness of Paul as a man and as a leader is shown on this voyage to Rome. His brave endurance of hardship, his presence of mind in time of danger, his tireless activity, his unselfishness, his practical wisdom, his sympathy for others, his good cheer, and above all, his perfect trust in God, are brought out by the exciting scenes of peril. But all these qualities have been shown again and again in the record of his life given in The Acts, and in his own self-revelation in his letters. He was the foremost man on that ship, because he had lived the noblest life and had acquired the grandest character.

A Heartener. On one of the Italian steamers fated to be sunk by a submarine, there was a mother with three children, a girl of eight and her brothers three and two years old. They were in a lifeboat adrift four days, buffeted by furious winds and an angry sea, which swept away three oars and the rudder. The provisions of bread and water were damaged by salt water. The little girl was the savior of the whole imperiled party by her heroic bravery. She cheered the flagging spirits of the

sailors while she clasped her little brothers in her arms to keep them warm. "How could men feel disheartened," said the first officer, telling the story, "when a girl of eight years made light of her sufferings?" On the third day the food and water were nearly gone. When land was sighted the crew was too nearly exhausted to reach shore and the wind drove them seaward. Despair seized everyone except the little girl, who told them not to give up, and even took a hand at an oar herself. A sailor suddenly went mad and slashed an artery in his arm. The little girl provided two handkerchiefs with which the officer in charge bound up the wound. That night the wind dropped, and, steering by the stars, the boat made land in the little bay of Mikros in the island of Crete.

Doesn't this remind us of the brave man whose courage cheered all the men in the shipwreck on the Mediterranean Sea? But Paul was a man, and as the officer said, "We expect a man to be brave; but this dear little eight-year-old heroine!" She looks far over the sea with her dark Italian eyes into the very depths of our hearts and we say, "Little sister, we, too, will be brave when the sea is high and we will forget our own anxieties in cheering and helping others."—Mrs. J. H. Knowles, in Talks by the Way.

A Disheartener. When Cousin Juliet went to spend the winter with the Burtons, the young people of Canterbury welcomed her with double cordiality, half upon the Burton's account and half upon her own. Juliet was pretty and clever and fond of gaiety, and at first was extremely popular.

As the months passed a change began to be noticed in the way people spoke of her. One day a girl explained it in a sentence. "Juliet is pretty and bright, I know," she said, "but somehow she takes all the flavor out of the things you have or do; you go away from a talk with her feeling so poor."

How did she do it? In such unconscious ways! When little Mrs. Bates, for instance, proud over her new achievement, showed her the first basket she had made, Juliet said that the "lazy squaw" stitch was such a comfort because anybody could pick it up.

Delicate Amy Eliot, who had been ordered to live in the open air as much as possible, began to study birds. One day she told Juliet delightedly that she had seen a cardinal. Juliet answered that the cardinal was one of the commonest birds in that part of the country.

She did not mean to be inconsiderate; she would have said that she was merely stating facts. But there are so many different ways of stating facts!

"There's folks that are smart and folks that are entertaining, and folks that are just as pretty to look at as pictures," an old countrywoman once said, "but give me every time the kind that heartens you up."

It is too good a word to grow old-fashioned, and happily the kind itself is never obsolete. If there are Juliets who dishearten—take the flavor out—there are always others whose lovely mission is to dispel the creeping mists, and make us see our small kingdoms bright and full of promise before us, and send us on our way "heartened up."—The Youth's Companion.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. The youth who will rule tomorrow is the youth who today is storing up resources of knowledge and wisdom, of self-reliance and courage.—Dr. Hillis.

"Our place is forward, not abaft;
We are the pilots of our craft."

Energy and invincible determination, with a right motive, are the levers that move the world.—Noah Porter.

To have high courage we must have the simplest and most loving faith.—Dr. I. O. Rankin.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.—Isaiah.

The thoughtless, others thoughtless make,
The brave make others brave.—Augustus M. Lord.

Circumstances are beyond the control of man, but his conduct is in his own power. —Beaumont.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is the modern name of Melita and to what country does it belong? 2. What happened to Paul while at Melita? 3. Trace Paul's course on the way from Melita to Rome. 4. What can you learn about Nero, the emperor to whom Paul appealed? 5. What did Paul say in Phil. 1.12-14 about the result of his imprisonment at Rome?

PAUL IN MELITA AND ROME

GOLDEN TEXT: I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Romans 1.16

LESSON Acts 28.1-31 DEVOTIONAL READING Romans 12.1-8

REFERENCE MATERIAL Romans 1.8-17; 16.1-20

ACTS 28.16 And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days he called together those that were the chief of the Jews: and when they were come together, he said unto them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans: 18 who, when they had examined me, desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. 19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught whereof to accuse my nation. 20 For this cause therefore did I entreat you to see and to speak with *me*: for because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. 21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judæa concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee. 22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded *the matter*, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.

30 And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. THE ARRIVAL AT ROME, verse 16. Upon reaching Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, though placed under the guard of a soldier, to whom he was probably chained. Soldiers relieved one another in this duty, and thus Paul became known throughout the Prætorian Guard, Phil. 1.12, 13. Paul never described himself as a prisoner of Rome, but always as the prisoner of Jesus Christ.

"The most galling chains about our wrists are not there without the will of our Father, the Lord of heaven and earth; and his will is not only to be taken patiently as something we are to be resigned to, but to be acquiesced in gladly. The Best of Fathers would not have handed us the cup had it not been the best cup for us, nor forged the shackle had it not meant our widest and largest usefulness" (Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin).

II. THE MEETING OF PAUL AND THE CHIEF JEWS OF ROME, verses 17-22. After resting only three days, Paul summoned the chief Jews in the city to meet him, and told them of his experiences, how, although he had in no way violated the customs of "our fathers," he had been delivered by the Jews of Jerusalem up to Roman authorities as a prisoner. The latter had been ready to set him at liberty, but when the Jews opposed this he had been forced to appeal to Cæsar. He had sent for them to tell them this: that because of the hope of Israel, the Messianic hope, he had been put in chains.

The most difficult task before Paul, the one he naturally most dreaded, was this conference with those Jewish authorities, and this was the first business to which he attended. "Tackle the dread" is the counsel which hangs over a business man's desk. Let us follow it as did Paul.

The Jews politely answered that they had had no written nor verbal report from Jerusalem concerning Paul; they wished to hear what he had to say, although they knew that this sect (speaking of the sect of the Nazarenes, Acts 24.5, as they would of the sect of the Sadducees) was everywhere condemned. Why were the Roman Jews so reserved and conciliatory? "The commonly received answer is that they lived in Rome in a state of great insecurity. They had but recently been allowed to return from banishment. Some think the decree of banishment had been occasioned by tumults caused by the unbelieving Jews attacking their Christian fellow-countrymen. They saw Paul respected by imperial officers; they felt themselves obliged to be very careful to avoid all show of disturbance."

III. PREACHING AND TEACHING IN ROME, verses 23, 24, 30, 31. A special day was appointed when great numbers of Jews came to Paul's lodging to hear him.

He preached to them, proclaiming the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God, for the common Jewish belief was in a temporal kingdom, and by recalling the law and the prophets he endeavored to persuade them concerning Jesus. As always, some believed and some disbelieved.

"Did it matter which they did? Does it seriously matter what a man believes? Well, it signifies just this—the lifting or lowering of conduct, a greatening or lessening of character, the making or marring of happiness, the saving or losing of the soul" (Dr. Frederick Homes Dudden).

For two whole years Paul abode in his own hired house, and to all who came to hear him he proclaimed the Kingdom of God, and taught them concerning Jesus, speaking with all boldness, none forbidding him. This is all that Luke tells us about Paul's life in Rome. They may have been uneventful years as far as Luke the historian saw them. Josephus says of Tiberius that he kept Herod Agrippa I long in bonds, "according to his usual custom, being a delayer of affairs." Later a law provided that a prisoner should be freed if the prosecutor failed to appear against him within a year.

"Most of us have now and then to endure forced pauses in life. We suffer the isolation of the sick chamber, are excluded from office, exchange busy life for retirement, obscurity, leisure. Let us beware of giving place to weariness, depression, inaction. Let us see if the suspended career is not a new opportunity; one, perhaps, designed to give us the time of our life" (Dr. W. L. Watkinson).

Does the Book of the Acts end here, or does it merely stop? What was Luke's purpose in his writing? Has he accomplished it?

"The New Acts of the Apostles is now being written. He who realizes that the God within the Bible is the God within our own perplexed life—individual, social, national—and dares apply the visions of the old time to the problems of the new, is in the true apostolic succession" (Dr. W. H. P. Faunce).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. How was Paul constrained to appeal unto Cæsar? In what cities where Paul preached have we been told that some believed and some did not? What Christians from Rome had Paul met at Corinth?

On the Island of Malta. The inhabitants of Melita (Malta), Luke gratefully recalls, showed the shipwrecked company "no common kindness," especially in kindling a fire on the shore for them. With this customary readiness to serve in any needed capacity, Paul busied himself in gathering sticks and throwing them on the fire. Suddenly those near were startled to see a viper that he had gathered up with sticks spring out of the pile and fasten upon his hands. The viper had probably been in a torpid state, and was restored to activity by the heat. "He is a murderer," the natives said one to another, "he has indeed escaped death at sea, but now he receives his just punishment." But Paul calmly shook off the viper into the fire, and when he failed to fall down dead from the bite the people changed their minds in regard to him and said that he must be a god.

Publius, the chief man of the island, entertained them courteously for three days. Paul repaid his kindness by curing his father; he also healed other sick persons who were brought to him. "The people honored us with many honors," Luke reports, "and when we sailed they put on board such things as we needed."

Alexandrian Ship

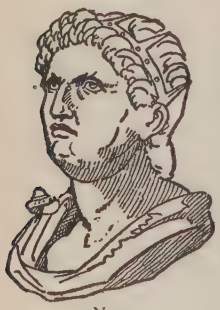
From Malta to Rome. Three months after the shipwreck, navigation began again, and the company sailed from Malta in a ship from Alexandria called "The Twin Brothers," from the sign painted on its prow. Three days were spent at Syracuse, and a day at Rhegium. Putioli, Italy, was the destination of the ship. There a week was spent, and news of Paul's coming having reached the Christians at Rome, two companies came along the Appian Way to meet him, one going as far as the Market of Appius and the other on to the Three Taverns. Their coming greatly rejoiced and encouraged Paul: "He

thanked God and took courage." And then they entered Rome. "How contemptuously emperor and philosopher and priest and patrician would have curled their lips if they had been told that in that little knot of Jewish prisoners lay a power before which they would cower and finally fade!"

Paul's Life in Rome. We know that during those two years in Rome "the care of the churches" weighed heavily upon Paul, and from the four Epistles probably written at this time—Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians—we know that he was blessed with the companionship of friends. Timothy and three others, Aristarchus, Jesus Justus, and Mark, who had been forgiven his defection at Antioch (15.39), were "a comfort" to him: Demas, a "fellow-worker," and Luke, "the beloved physician," were with him; Tychicus, whom he used as a messenger, Epaphras, who brought him news from Colossæ, Epaphroditus, who brought him a contribution from Philippi, and Onesimus, the runaway Christian slave of Colossæ, were among his visitors.

Paul's Fate. From Philemon 22, we know that Paul was expecting a speedy release, and it is generally believed that his expectation was realized. Professor Ramsay believes that Paul was detained at Rome to await the coming of his persecutors to testify against him. The trial could not begin until there was an accuser to state the ground of complaint. The Palestinian Jews failed to come, for they knew their case was too weak to be put forward in a Roman Court. Two successive Roman governors of Palestine had said Paul was guiltless. Their non-appearance kept Paul imprisoned the "two years." The law presumed the accused innocent after eighteen months. (This was later the law, and Professor Ramsay argues plausibly that it was a law enacted some years before Paul's time by the Emperor Claudius.) The space of two years is equivalent to the legal term of eighteen months, together with additional time required for the formalities of release. There was, therefore, no proper "first trial," but only an acquittal in default.

Tradition says that after his release Paul visited Spain. From 1 Timothy and Titus (believed to have been written later than the first imprisonment), we learn that he went to Greece, Crete, Ephesus, and Macedonia, passing through Troas, and that he intended spending the winter at Nicopolis in Epirus. In July, 64, the greater part of Rome was burned over, and Nero, to avert suspicion from himself, accused the Christians of having set the fire. Multitudes of Christians were put to death after horrible tortures, many of them being burnt as torches in the emperor's garden on the Vatican hill.



Nero

By the middle of June A. D. 68, Nero had died in disgrace, and tradition says that before then Paul met his fate. Even tradition supplies only a few details, to the effect that he was beheaded on the Ostian Road, three miles from the city, and that a matron named Lucina, who lived beside this road, buried his body on her own land.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Malta, where we left Paul last week, it was a day's sail to Syracuse on the eastern coast of Sicily. Crossing from Sicily to Italy through the southern entrance of the Straits of Messina, Paul's ship touched at Rhegium, and then followed the coast northward as far as Puteoli, at the northern extremity of the Bay of Naples. Puteoli has been aptly called "The Liverpool of Rome," for it was the usual harbor for ships from the East carrying passengers or freight for the imperial city. The rest of the journey was by land.

Twelve miles from Puteoli Paul and his company reached Capua, and the celebrated Appian Way, broad and finely paved, over which for five hundred years victorious generals and armies had marched. Forty-three miles from Rome they came to the Market of Appius, and ten miles from the capital to another station called The Three Taverns.

Rome, the capital of the Empire, is on the Tiber about fifteen miles from its mouth. Its population at this time was 1,600,000. Although the Coliseum and other reminders today of Rome's ancient greatness did not then exist, the city was, nevertheless, the chief city of the world in wealth and splendor.

For the Blackboard. Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli, Rome.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Once Paul had been a Pharisee and the chief of sinners; now he is a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and eager to proclaim the fact. This is what he meant when he wrote to the Romans the words of our Golden Text. Are you imitators of Paul in this, that you speak of your own Christian experiences in your teaching? No other words could have greater weight with your class. Your Christian faith and your Christian hopes—your grand confidence in the power of the gospel—your belief in the message which you bring to your pupils week after week—do they realize it all?

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

Beginning the Lesson. John Bunyan was thrust into prison by Royalist persecutors. Yet his heart was full of peace. He says: "As I was going forth of the doors, I had much ado to forbear saying to them that I carried the peace of God along with me; but I held my peace, and blessed be the Lord, went away to prison with God's comfort in my poor soul."

In Bedford, England, is preserved the jail door which for twelve years was locked on John Bunyan. Dr. Wayland Hoyt refers to the prayers which Bunyan must have pleaded for its opening, and exclaims: "But how fruitful were those years! Dreams were going on behind that door, and the world needed them. When the Pilgrim's Progress of which Bunyan dreamed had taken shape and tangibility, Bunyan's Lord, who had not forgotten him while the slow years passed, swung the jail door wide."

Coin of Rhegium

Like Bunyan, Paul went to his imprisonment with the peace of God in his heart, and the years that followed were most fruitful. For years Paul had been praying that he might see Rome. His prayer was answered, but in a way very different from what he had expected. How did he reach there? (Text Explained.)

Paul's Ministry in Rome. Paul's imprisonment turned out to the furtherance of his great purpose, that of making the gospel known to the uttermost part of the earth.

Said a minister once in the course of his sermon, "I wish I could be handcuffed to some of you for half an hour till you should hear me out!" Had Paul come to Rome a free man he never could have reached the Roman legions and Cæsar's household (Phil. 4.22) as he did through the soldiers to whom he was chained, one after another. In Philippians 1.12, 13, he recognizes this fact: "Now I would have you know, brethren," he writes, "that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole Prætorian Guard, and to all the rest." Then the example of his missionary activity from his place of confinement was a greater spur to the Christians in Rome than it could have been had he been free. His abode must have been their headquarters, and he further writes the Philippians that "Most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear." And how much more he accomplished for all people in all lands and ages through the letters he had opportunity to write than he could have done by personal ministry!

I am not Ashamed of the Gospel: for it is the Power of God unto Salvation to Every One that Believeth. Why does Paul use the negative instead of the positive expression? Why should he be content with asserting the mere absence of a sense of disgrace, when he might have been expected to exult in a sense of triumphant glory? Is not the reason clear? Is it not plain that Paul deprecates any feeling of shame concerning Christianity because he has a distinct remembrance of the time when Christianity did present itself to his mind as a thing to be ashamed of? He remembers that the gospel of Christ originally came before him in a garb of extreme humility, and in an attitude which excited his contempt as a son of Israel—an attitude which impelled him to say, "I would be ashamed to belong to such a company." And if we ask what awakened this sense of contempt, the answer is found in this very passage. When Paul says "I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is power," he means to imply that he was at one time ashamed of it from believing it to be weakness. His objection to recognizing Jesus as the Messiah originated in the fact that the cross of

Jesus was contrary to the current ideal of greatness.—Dr. George Matheson, in Spiritual Development of St. Paul.

The Contrast between Paul's Day and Ours. It is an easy thing now to be proud of the gospel of Christ, for we stand in the presence of its accomplished facts, and we see it recognized as the greatest and the ever-increasing force in the world. No, it requires no boldness and proves no merit to glory in that which all men speak well of; to swell the triumphal procession of an acknowledged victor. If St. Paul could have thrown himself in imagination into the place where we stand today, and been able to look back, as we do, upon nineteen centuries of Christian labor and advance, there would have been nothing very wonderful in this saying, "I am not ashamed of the gospel." But at that time all that we are witnesses of had yet to be proved. The gospel then had won only a few scattered adherents, chiefly among the poor and uncultured. It had no church buildings, no organized ministry, no standing in respectable society. No school of thinkers and writers had recognized it; no government or magistrates or civil power had noticed it, except to curse it as a disturbing pest; no poetry, art, genius or literature had been brought into its service; no eloquence had extolled it; no wealth had been laid in tribute at its feet. It had been rejected by all rulers, priests, and dignified personages.

Think of all that, and then the weight of these words of St. Paul impresses you. It was wonderful, indeed, that he could speak with such absolute confidence about this gospel, calling it the great power of God, anticipating the time when the despised name of Jesus would be incomparably mightier than Cæsar's, and when the truths which had their center in the cross would have prevailed over all the magnificent pride and intellectual glory of that ancient world. Yes, it required a great prophetic vision to speak these words then: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."

Now the triumphs of the gospel confront us everywhere. In every great city the masterpieces of architecture are those which Christian art has raised. Wherever we travel, unless it be in heathen lands, the most attractive buildings are those around which cluster long Christian memories, and which owe their existence to Christian devotion. In every famous picture-gallery the paintings which charm us most, and speak to us with the inspiration of genius, are those which show us apostles, saints, and heroes of the long Christian warfare. When we read the records of the past, every page that is best worth reading, which we read over and over again, tells us of some of the doings of men who owed all their courage, goodness, and grandeur to the faith of Jesus, and learnt all their self-forgetting virtues and service at the foot of his cross.

And everywhere the works of the gospel are in evidence. You see them in Sunday-schools, homes for the fallen, orphanages, hospitals, and institutions countless, which lay his healing hand upon the ignorant, diseased, and miserable and preach a message of recovery and hope to the most abject and desperate. You see and hear of hundreds of thousands of homes and private lives into which this gospel brings patience, strength, courage, and gladness. You cannot count or estimate how many hearts are nerved by it to endure the disappointments of life, the rebuffs of fortune, the stings of the world's malice and neglect, the weariness of sickness, and the blows of bereavement; how many are made brave to struggle on through all the fierce and ungenerous competitions and keep their heads lifted above the deep waters, and face death when it comes with a cheerful smile, because they have him with them who saved the sinking Peter in the days of old, and took the sting from death by bearing it himself. —J. G. Greenhough.

For Discussion. 1. The Character of Paul.

2. What Paul accomplished.

3. The place that Paul holds today.

Questions for Pupils to Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. Which are the "Pastoral Letters"; why are they so called; when were they written? 2. What do we know of Paul's life after the two years in his own hired house at Rome? 3. What is the meaning of verse six of our text? 4. Verse seven? 5. What is your estimate of Paul?

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
A PRISONER PREACHING

Beginning the Lesson. During a rebellion in Egypt when many Christians were massacred, Mrs. Layyah Barakat secured passage at Alexandria on board a ship bound

for Malta. In A Message from Mount Lebanon, Mrs. Barakat gives her experience on the way and on reaching the island. "Our bed was on the deck of the vessel; our coverlet, the high waves of the Mediterranean Sea which washed across us. All day I would sit in the sun to dry my clothes; then after the sun went down the heavy breakers would rise again and again I would be wet to the skin. Yet, in thankfulness for our deliverance we felt that God was leading us and that the future was in his hand.

"At last, strangers in a strange land, we arrived at the island of Malta. That first afternoon in Malta was a dreary time for me. I took my little baby and went out by the sea, and as I sat there thinking of the past I could not help the tears. Homesick, hungry, alone in a strange town, I could see in all the world nothing but darkness. But as I sat there, there passed me an English nurse with a sweet baby in a little carriage. She stopped and began to talk to me. I could understand part of what she said, though I was unable to answer. She stayed only a moment, then passed on; but in a short time she returned, and, putting my baby in the now empty carriage, requested me to follow her.

"In a very few minutes I found myself in a beautiful home, the residence of one of the British officers in the island. The lady who received me there was a Christian woman; I could see it in her face as soon as I looked at her. When she found out that we were refugees from Egypt she was very sympathetic, and showed it in act as well as word, providing a dress and a pair of shoes for me and also for my little girl, as well as some other much-needed clothing. As I left her house she put two English pounds into my hand, patted me kindly on the shoulder, and begged me not to cry. 'God will provide,' she said. The relief and encouragement that her goodness brought to me I cannot describe."

It was this island of Malta which was called Melita in Paul's day. Here it was that Paul was saved from shipwreck. And here it was that he received kindnesses from the people of the island. What did they do for him? How did he finally reach Rome?

The End of the Long Journey. After some adventures on the island during a stay of three months, the prisoners were all put on board another ship, named The Twin Brothers, which safely reached Puteoli, a harbor near Naples. Paul now saw the beautiful Italian sky, the blue waters of the Italian sea, the wonderful Roman town of Pompeii, thirteen years later to be destroyed by Mount Vesuvius in the great eruption. Have you ever noticed that although Paul traveled far and wide and saw beautiful scenery and wonderful buildings yet no account of them gets into his story? He must have been absorbed in his work, with thoughts for nothing but the spreading of the new Kingdom.

Tomb of Cecilia Metella, on the Appian Way, Which Paul Must Have Passed

He was still a long way from Rome. He was ill. The voyage had been hard and wearisome. He felt lonely and sad. Forty miles from Rome a little company of Christians met him, and ten miles farther on another band, and both he and they were strengthened, comforted.

On he went, perhaps escorted by his friends, along the road to Rome, the Appian Way. The great highway was straight, paved, bordered by cypress trees which grew tall and straight, like Rome's sentinels. At intervals, too, were the tombs of the great men of the past.

Far away across the plain, the Campagna, he saw the city of Rome rise on her seven hills. The great wall, with its gates and forts, surrounded the city. Paul was taken into the city, perhaps to the Jewish quarter, where he was allowed to hire a part of a house as his prison.

It was no dungeon in which he was confined. His friends could visit him. I think his spirits rose as he talked with these faithful ones. He could hold small meetings within his room, and friends could supply his wants. He could dictate or write letters to the converts left behind in Greece and Asia Minor, thanking them for their thought of him and their prayers, and giving wise counsel which should help in their difficulties. Chained in that prison room he led into Christ's Kingdom soldiers who served in the Emperor's Palace as the Imperial Guard.—Condensed from The Steep Ascent, by Emily E. Entwistle.

How Paul Lived at Rome. Julius, the centurion, would be sure to speak well of Paul to the officers of the guard. "He is a splendid fellow, this Paul. We owe much to him on this journey. You can trust him to the uttermost. If you were even to parole him on his own simple promise you would be perfectly safe. Such men as he could not lie to you. Be as good to him as you can."

And so instead of languishing in the Prætorian dungeons, he was allowed to live outside in his own hired lodging with the soldier that guarded him and with free leave to see and communicate with his friends. So I read, "He abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling . . . teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, no man forbidding him."

Paul's letters refer frequently to his chains and his bonds. "The soldier that guarded him" may seem a small matter. But put yourself in his place. Think of the intolerable infliction of being chained all the time to another, a heathen soldier, often a brutal, beastly sort of man.

But Paul had to get used to it. And I think he did more, that he made his guards like him. You see the duty would not be very irksome to them for a few hours at a time. They could not help admiring the high character and kindly disposition of their prisoner. I can well believe that some of them grew attached to him, that little groups of them off duty would drop in and talk to him in the evenings. And Paul could not be long in intercourse with any man without helping him towards higher things. They often chatted to each other in barracks about their prisoner and his religion. And he was quite pleased at this. He tells the Philippians in a letter of this period: "The things that have happened to me have turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, for my bonds in Christ have become manifest throughout the whole Prætorian Guard." We gather that some of them became faithful disciples of Christ, for he writes in the same letter: "The Christian brethren that are here salute you, especially those that are of Cæsar's household," who would probably be the Prætorian life-guards. When one thinks how many soldiers would come in close touch with him in the continual change of the guard during two years, one can imagine the difference it would make in that regiment.

The Roman Christians were, of course, his most frequent visitors. You can well believe that his presence in that prison room deepened the whole life of that Christian community. Many a poor sinner would come to him in his trouble. Many a poor presbyter would come to consult him and to talk about Jesus and go back to his congregation with his spirit stirred to preach to them the next Sunday as he had never preached before. Paul himself wrote to the Philippians: "Most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear."—Condensed from The Story of St. Paul's Life, by J. Paterson-Smyth.

Another Prisoner's Ministry. In a disreputable quarrel Paul Graynor killed a man and was sentenced to forty years' imprisonment. In prison he came to himself, was filled with remorse for his former life, and resolved to make the best possible use of the opportunities still left him. He became a sort of prison evangelist, and led many of his associates to seek and find the Savior whom he called his Master. He organized classes and taught stenography, bookkeeping and commercial arithmetic. Several of his pupils secured good positions upon their release. At the end of fifteen years a pardon was granted him, but he refused to accept it.

"Happy as he must have been that liberty was within reach," says The Youth's Companion, "and that he had so lived as thus to commend himself to the authorities of the prison and the commonwealth, he still refused to accept the pardon. He sent word to the governor that he was worth nothing to the world outside, but that within the prison walls he had found a place of usefulness among his fellow convicts. So he faces the coming twenty-five years behind the bars, with rejoicing that thus he may fulfil his mission among those whom he can assist toward lives of hope and usefulness.

"The lesson of this man's life is full of encouragement. The secret of it is the

power of the spirit to conquer difficulties and break material bonds. The reason he is willing to remain in prison is because he has long since escaped from prison.

'Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage.'

"Many a life that suffers from inevitable limitations which constitute a life imprisonment amid uncongenial surroundings, might become radiant and beautiful if it could discover the secret of this convict. Many a heart beating its life out in bitter and unavailing protest against its unhappy conditions might become blessed in becoming a blessing to others."

The Power to See it Through. The qualities which lead a boy to launch out on an enterprise with promising enthusiasm may be accompanied by a lack of those qualities which will see him through to a successful finish. Good starters and good stayers are not necessarily the same people. Ardor, excitement, susceptibility to sudden feeling, the flare of good intentions—such forces set one going, but they do not enable one to carry on when the going is hard. That requires another kind of moral energy which evidently is not so common as the first. Plenty of people are equipped with efficient self-starters. They get away easily. They are off with a fleet eagerness that wakens high expectations, but they peter out; thy soon stick in the sand or stall on a high hill.

Nevertheless, even in our individual enterprises, much more in our whole life's meaning, the ultimate test is our ability to finish. In one of our Federal prisons today is a man who for fifty years with unblemished reputation lived a life of probity and honor in his own community. Then, as a government servant, he went to France during the War and mishandled funds. Only that will be remembered about him. The half century of fine living is blotted out. He was not able to finish.

Many a man has made a clean hit in youth, has gotten to first base, has run to second, has reached third; he is very well content with himself—he is succeeding finely—and then he is caught napping off third when there is no need of it, when all his friends are counting on him to get home.

The kind of patience which can carry one through to a great finish in his personal life is founded on religious faith. That this universe is fundamentally a moral order, that there are reason and purpose in it, that what ought to be can be done, that, as Carlyle cried, "No lie can live forever"—these are religious convictions which undergird one to carry on when carrying on is hard.

As for personal experience, to what triumphant endings has religious faith brought multitudes who have understood its power! If ever any one had a difficult conclusion to face, it was Jesus. Yet if he had given up in Gethsemane, unable to finish, all his teaching would have been forgotten, his works of mercy would have dropped into oblivion, and the divine life would have been wasted. His victory lay in his power to say on Calvary, "It is finished." If ever a man might have been tempted to give up, it was Paul. Yet if in Nero's prison he had collapsed, unable to finish, all his fine start on the Damascus Road would have gone for nothing, and his long and arduous labor would have lost its fruit. The significance of his life hung on his ability to say at last, "I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

Indeed, through the power of vital religion, not simply the naturally strong and well-equipped, but the unpromising and feeble win through to a fine conclusion. Bunyan was right when, bringing his victorious company of pilgrims to the gates of the Celestial City, he numbered among them not simply Great-heart, Valiant-for-truth, Honest, and Stand-fast, but also Mr. Feeble-mind, Mr. Ready-to-halt, Mr. Despondency, and his daughter, Much-afraid. They, too, had been given the power to see it through.—Condensed from Twelve Tests of Character, by Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime, and all was for best.—Browning.

Make us to meet what is or is to be
With fervid welcome, knowing it is sent
To serve us in some way full excellent,
Though we discern it all belatedly.—James Whitcomb Riley.

Questions for Pupils to Look Up or Think About for the Next Lesson. 1. What is said about Timothy in The Acts and in Paul's Letters? (See Subject Index of your Bible.) 2. Who was emperor of Rome A. D. 54-68, and for what was he noted? 3. What occurred at Rome in A. D. 64? 4. What does Paul say in 1 Cor. 9.24, 25; Acts 20.24?

LESSON XII—DECEMBER 20

PAUL'S SUMMARY OF HIS LIFE

(See page 412 for the Christmas Lesson)

GOLDEN TEXT: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. 2 Timothy 4.7

LESSON 2 Timothy 3.10, 11; 4.6-18

DEVOTIONAL READING Revelation 21.1-7

REFERENCE MATERIAL Romans 8.31-39; 12.1, 2; 1 Corinthians 15.57

2 TIMOTHY 3.10 But thou didst follow my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, 11 persecutions, sufferings; what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: and out of them all the Lord delivered me.

4.6 For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: 8 henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

9 Give diligence to come shortly unto me: 10 for Demas forsook me, having loved this present world, and went to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is useful to me for ministering. 12 But Tychicus I sent to Ephesus. 13 The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord will render to him according to his works; 15 of whom do thou also beware; for he greatly withstood our words. 16 At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account. 17 But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

THE TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

I. TIMOTHY IS REMINDED OF PAUL'S SUFFERINGS AND DELIVERANCES, 3.10, 11. Timothy had followed his teaching, Paul writes; he had witnessed his conduct, had realized his purpose, faith, longsuffering, love and patience. He had known about the manifold persecutions which Paul had had to endure, at Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and elsewhere; and the great fact that out of them all God had delivered him. And then Paul warns Timothy that persecution is the common lot of all faithful followers of Christ Jesus.

"Foes in plenty we shall meet,
Hearts courageous scorn defeat,
So we press with eager feet
Up and on.
Ever onward to the fight,
Ever upward to the Light,
Ever true to God and Right—
Up and on!—John Oxenham.

II. PAUL'S APPROACHING DEATH AND REWARD, 4.6-8. Paul's solemn charge to Timothy to preach the word is enforced by his solemn reference to his own approaching martyrdom as if it were already accomplished: "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come." The literal translation of the Greek is, "I am already poured out as a drink-offering." There was a drink-offering of wine "poured out unto Jehovah," Num. 28.7. Paul's whole life had been a sacrifice offered to God, and now his martyrdom is so near that he speaks of the shedding of his blood as a drink-offering already being offered. Paul had the desire to "depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better," Phil. 1.23.

"To Paul death did not mean the cessation of consciousness nor the sleep of the soul, but to be absent from the body was to be at home with the Lord" (Dr. C. R. Erdman).

Then with assurance Paul cries, "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give to me at that day," the day of Judgment. "The crown of righteousness, in plain words, is that kind and measure of bliss which the wrestler in righteousness alone is either entitled to or prepared to enjoy" (Dr. A. M. Fairbairn). And then Paul adds: "And not to me

only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." "It is as if a father should console his little son seated beside him, and unable to bear the bereavement, saying, 'My son, weep not; we lived honorably, and having come to old age we left you; our life has been blameless, we depart with glory; you can also acquire honor from the things that have been done to us'" (Chrysostom).

"We talk in a feeble way about hearing the Judge say on the last day, 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' and we have some idea that the result will depend on holding the correct belief in our minds. I believe that when we get to the judgment seat we shall be expected to say, 'I have run a good race. I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith.' I expect to be called to account for life. We are not going to win a high prize unless we are willing to do something" (Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell).

Then Paul gives voice to his triumphant confession—"I have fought the good fight," I have contested earnestly in the good contest, for it is the athlete that the apostle has in mind; like a runner in the games "I have finished the course" (see 1 Cor. 9.24; Acts 20.24). As contestants keep the rules of the games, so I have kept the rules of life's course, I have trusted in God, "I have kept the faith." "Paul is here stating that he had received the gospel as a sacred deposit, he had guarded it with ceaseless care, and now he is intrusting it to Timothy who is thus encouraged not only to fight manfully and to run eagerly, but also, as the figure of speech changes to one which Paul used earlier in the letter, to guard 'that good thing which was committed' to him" (Dr. C. R. Erdman).

A Crown Presented to Peter and Paul From the bottom of a glass cup found in the Catacombs at Rome

"Life is a battle—fight it bravely; life is a course—run it eagerly; life is a faith-keeping—hold it firmly; but do not think to win the righteousness by your battle, by your race, or by your faithkeeping. God will give it to you: it is his free gift, if you simply love him and wish to see him" (Dr. Lyman Abbott).

III. PAUL'S LONELINESS, 4.9-12. Paul was lonely and he longed for Timothy's presence: "Give diligence to come shortly unto me," he urged. "The conclusive evidence of the place that Timothy held in Paul's affections is this: that of all his friends Timothy was the one Paul wanted to have with him when he came to die. In that solemn hour when life draws near its close, men want only their closest and their best about. And it was Timothy that Paul wanted when in his cell at Rome he was waiting the day of his death" (Dr. J. D. Jones).

"There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
In the place of their self-content;
There are souls like stars, that dwell apart
In a fellowless firmament"—

but Paul was not one of them. He had a genius for friendship, and a genius for expressing it: his letters are filled with affectionate words to his friends and about his friends. He was never happy when he was "fellowless."

"'A friend in need,' my neighbor said to me—
'A friend, indeed, is what I meant to be:
In time of trouble I will come to you,
And in the hour of need you'll find me true.'
I thought a bit, and took him by the hand:
'My friend,' said I, 'you do not understand
The inner meaning of that simple rhyme—
A friend is what the heart needs all the time'" (Dr. Henry van Dyke).

Paul was forsaken by Demas, his fellow-worker (Philemon 24) whose heart had not room for both the things of this world and the things of God. Evidently he had put his hand to the plow and then turned back. "That Demas had become an apostate from the Christian faith, is by no means certain, although tradition so indicates. Probably he had become discouraged by hardships and had fled from Rome at a time when the persecution under Nero was becoming more perilous. It is enough disgrace that he deserted Paul in the hour of direst need" (Dr. C. R. Erdman).

Demas had gone to Thessalonica; Crescus to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia; Tychicus, Paul had sent to Ephesus. Only Luke, "the beloved physician" (Col. 4.14), was with him. He longs for Timothy and also for Mark, who had failed him earlier but now is useful to him for ministering. Mark was once a handicap, but now he can be of great service. "'Bring Mark along with you'—the words remind one of the words of Jesus to the women, 'Go tell my disciples, and Peter.' Peter, the man who had sinned and brought disgrace on himself and weakness to the cause, that is the man to whom the women are sent. So now does Paul say to Timothy, 'Come to me as soon as you can, and bring Mark along with you.' If Paul was too harsh with the young man when he stumbled and fell, the compassionate heart of the aged apostle now opens wide and takes him in" (Dr. C. E. Jefferson).

"Failure in the past is no doom for any man. It is only a challenge to find the truer self that has not yet been quite discovered" (Dr. John Kelman).

IV. COMMISSIONS AND WARNING, 4.13-15. Winter was approaching, and Paul sent for his long, sleeveless cloak which had been left at Troas, and also for books, especially parchments. "This commission adds a tender touch of human interest and enables us to see the aged sufferer in the damp prison cell, shivering in the chill of an approaching winter; but it flashes a further light upon that indomitable spirit who, in circumstances of deepest distress, was eager to continue work with his manuscripts and books."

He is never alone who has the companionship of good books.

Paul next warns Timothy against Alexander the coppersmith who had caused the apostle much trouble: "The Lord will render to him according to his works," he exclaimed. "Here is the real Paul—eager to sacrifice himself, yet not quite ready to forgive his enemies; facing death with sublime tranquillity, yet still settling accounts with those who had done him a lot of harm" (Dr. F. G. Peabody).

V. PAUL WAS ALONE AND YET NOT ALONE AT HIS FIRST HEARING, 4.16, 17. No one took his part then, all forsook him—may it not be laid to their account. Yet in his hour of need "the Lord stood by me," Paul declared, "and so strengthened me that I was enabled to proclaim my message of the gospel of Christ so that all the Gentiles might hear, and also saved me from the threatening danger." "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" is a quotation from Ps. 22.21, and may refer to Nero, or the lions in the amphitheater, or his Jewish accusers, or the jaws of death.

"Behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above his own" (Lowell).

"It is a plausible conjecture of Conybeare and Howson that the first hearing, when he was acquitted, was on the charge of complicity and sympathy with the incendiaries who had burned Rome in 64; and that charge was triumphantly disproved. The second and fatal charge, heard later, was doubtless that of treason, shown by hostility to the established customs of society and by weakening the imperial authority" (Professor Ramsay).

VI. PAUL'S GREAT ASSURANCE, 4.18. "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work," exultantly Paul cried, "and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom." And then he added his doxology "To whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."

"We leave Paul in his old age not creeping into port, a wreck with broken masts and rudder gone, but full sail still, and strong for other voyages on other seas" (Phillips Brooks).

"What a triumphant personality Paul was! And what a source of triumphant personality have thousands like Paul found in the faith and fellowship of him who said: 'Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' The most useful gift which any one can bring to the world is a triumphant life, and the sources of that lie deep in a spiritual experience of God" (Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick).

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions Bearing upon the Lesson. Who discovered Paul and saved him for the Christian ministry? What experiences did he afterwards have with Paul? Who was Paul's second helper in his missionary work? What other friends of Paul have appeared in our lessons? How did John Mark arouse Paul's displeasure? What trouble did this make? What have we heard about Timothy?

Paul's Regard for Timothy. Timothy was the best beloved of all Paul's younger friends. In his letters to him Paul calls him "My true child in the faith," "My dearly beloved son." Timothy's mother was a Jewess, and his father a Greek. They lived in Lystra. By his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois, Timothy had been taught the sacred writings as a child, and when Paul came to his city and preached faith in Christ, Timothy was among the converts. He accompanied Paul on various journeys, and we meet him at Ephesus, Philippi, Berœa, Corinth and Rome. "He worketh the work of the Lord as I also do," Paul wrote the Corinthians; and to the Philippians he wrote, "I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state. As a son with the father he hath served me in the gospel." In his second letter Paul says, "I thank God now unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications."

The Second Epistle to Timothy. The two letters to Timothy and the one to Titus are called The Pastoral Epistles, because they are addressed to these two favorite puplis and fellow-workers of Paul in their official capacity as pastors, and give directions for the founding and governing of churches and the treatment of members.

Timothy joined Paul on his Second Missionary Journey. He was in charge of the church at Ephesus when Paul during his final imprisonment at Rome on the eve of his martyrdom wrote this second letter. Bengel calls it "The last will and testament of Paul and his swan song."

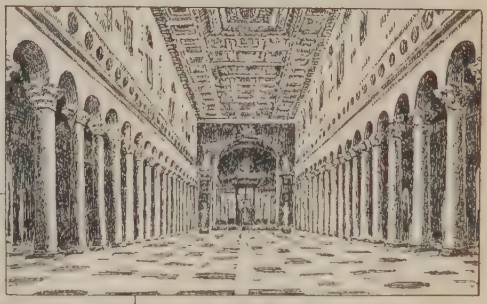
THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

For Rome, see the last lesson. Underneath a little church in Rome dedicated to the Virgin Mary are walls and chambers that were built in the days of the Roman emperors, and tradition says they belonged to the hired house occupied by Paul.

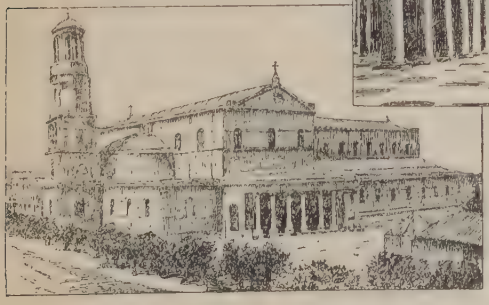
In the reign of Constantine a church was built outside the walls of Rome over the spot where Paul was supposed to have been buried. Many Popes have restored and embellished it, and today the new "St Paul's Without the Walls" is a very beautiful and interesting cathedral. Especially beautiful are the eighty granite Corinthian columns and the wonderful mosaics and frescoes of the building.

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE POWER OF A CONSECRATED LIFE

Beginning the Lesson. Paul had not been successful as the world counts success. He had suffered the loss of all things, had been through trials and persecutions manifold, had been worried and tormented by his own people, had been hunted and despised and beaten and imprisoned by his enemies, and now the headman's ax awaits him. He did not claim that he had won a great victory, only that he had fought a good fight. He had finished his course.



Interior of St. Paul's



St. Paul's Without the Walls, Rome

The mightiest missionary of the cross, the greatest theologian of the Church, had done his work well, and he had the satisfaction that Stanley on his return from one of his African expeditions thus expressed: "No honor or reward, however great, can be equal to that subtle satisfaction that a man feels when he can point to his own work and say, 'See, now, the task I promised you to perform with all loyalty and honesty, with

might and main, to the uttermost of my ability, and God willing, is today finished. Say, is it well and truly done?' and when the employer shall confess that 'It is well and truly done,' can there be any recompense higher than that to one's inward self?"

Paul's Consecrated Life. I was in Gouverneur, New York, awhile ago, and I went into a telegraph office there and fell into conversation with the operator, and he told me that his call was the letter "G." And he said to me: "I am sometimes busy about the office, and the instrument is ticking off its messages, but I do not seem to hear them because they are not my letter. But the moment they sound 'G' I hear it, and I go and put my finger on the key. And I am sometimes sleeping, and the messages are sent through the darkness as well as the light; but I don't know them. But when the 'G' sounds, even if I am asleep, I hear that, because it is my call; and I go and put my finger on the key to let them know that I am here." That seems to be the attitude of Paul to Jesus Christ. He knows what his call is; and whatever is transpiring in the world, whenever Jesus calls "Paul!" Paul is ready to answer, and ready to obey whatever the Master may have for him to do.—Bishop Luther B. Wilson.

The Fight of Faith. "The fight of faith"—what does this mean? What is this exultant cry, "I have kept the faith"? It means, of course, that "the faith" is not something which can be kept as one keeps a jewel or a money-bag, or as one keeps a pressed flower between the leaves of a book. It is something that must be struggled for, fought for, and won to the very end of life. What is more pitiable than a Christian who has no onward life, who knows that he is a Christian only because he remembers the date of his conversion? Paul would certainly not call this "keeping the faith." "Keeping the faith" for him was always bound up in action. It cannot be separated from fighting the good fight and running the course to the finish.—Dr. Rufus M. Jones, in Practical Christianity.

Putting a Purpose into Life. A great French doctor, Alex Munthe, tells a story of a young girl who came to his consulting room in Paris utterly bored with life and so miserable that she contemplated suicide. She had wealth and could get anything she wished, but she did not wish for anything. She had leisure and could go anywhere she liked, but she did not want to go anywhere. She was useless to herself and to everybody else. Her parents had dragged her from one physician to another, and under their orders she had wintered in Egypt, yachted in the Mediterranean, visited Japan, and was still consumed by ennui. And then, one day, she chanced upon a story Dr. Munthe had written describing very tenderly the love of dolls among children, and the thousands of poor children in Paris who had never possessed a doll. "Here is something I can do, I can dress dolls," she said. "I won't send a check, that won't help me; but I will dress dolls for these lonely children." And so she went to work, toiling for twelve hours a day in dressing dolls for the poor, and with what result to herself? "I have been strangely happy," she said. "I have felt more happiness this last week than I have in years."

"She had descended from her proud isolation into the communion of human service," comments Dr. W. J. Dawson, who tells the story. "There were no more thoughts of suicide. The descent into humble service proved to be ascent into a paradise of happiness. It was a very small task she had discovered for herself, but it put an unselfish purpose into a life that had been vain and empty. Put a purpose into your life and from that hour ennui will disappear. Idleness of mind and lack of direction of conduct are the most fruitful sources of human misery. Put an unselfish purpose into your life, and you, like Jesus, will become the possessor of that peace which the world can neither give nor take away."

The Power of a Consecrated Life. In the renunciation of self, in the dedication of life to selfless service, in surrender to a heavenly Master, there is a deep and abiding peace. The Cæsars of Christ's day and time pass, Tiberius to his gloom and madness at Capri, Nero to his disgraceful death as a cowardly fugitive, but neither they nor any of their tribe knew the triumphant tranquillity of the man who from a Roman prison wrote, "I have fought the good fight." The great world-masters of our own day, who have lived for no higher things than wealth and power, pass, but it is rarely that you do not hear in their final confession the bitter wail, "All is vanity." In no life truly surrendered to the will of God and the service of humanity is that wail ever heard. Moreover, the only truly great lives have been the surrendered lives. The despised apostle who said, "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain," does actually count for more in human history than all the Cæsars, for the divine impulses of his life remain to urge men on to nobleness, while these other lives are totally forgotten. All the plutocrats who have exploited the riches of America

count for less than one Abraham Lincoln, who laid down his life in the service of his country. We admit these things to be true. Do we apprehend why they are true? Do we see that the whole secret of personal peace as well as of true greatness is found in following the example of him who said, "I give my life a ransom for many?"—Dr. W. J. Dawson.

He Won the Race. At the Field Day exercises of the Mercersburg Academy my profoundest admiration was provoked by an incident in the two-mile race. The track is a quarter of a mile around, so that the runners had to cover it eight times to make the two miles. Some twenty young fellows entered the contest, and the race was run in good form; but the lad who got my heartiest applause was not the one who won the prize. Indeed, he was the one who came out last. When the winner scored the goal, this lad of whom I speak was some three-eighths of a mile behind. As he came around the seventh time the trainer insisted that he come off but he declined. With no chance to win, he persisted in running the race to the end. He had entered for two miles and he was determined to run two miles. As he started on the last lap, the bleachers broke into applause. I thought of the line from the Apocalypse which says: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life"; and I said to myself: "The lad has lost the prize, but he has won the race. If he will put that spirit into life, nothing can keep him down. If in the great race of life he will stick to duty and drive on with the same unswerving fidelity to the last lap of the road and to the final tick of the clock, the great Judge of awards will give him the crown."

Paint this schoolboy incident on the larger canvas of life and you have the real hero of the world. A man has run the long race. He has lagged behind his fellows, but he has done his best and kept on. He has persisted through countless difficulties. He has little applause, for he is a mere plodder. Few cheers lift up his tired feet, and no crowds shout his name with wild huzzas. He is running a tame race, and again and again some fleeter-footed runner leaves him behind, but he plods on, his breath coming faster and harder as he nears the end.

At last he staggers across the goal line. He has put himself into the race such as it was. He has been faithful unto death, and, gasping in the throes of dissolution, he turns his face towards the Judge. Then a strange thing happens, for as he dies he lives; as he fails, he succeeds; as he fails, he finds the Rock of Ages beneath his feet; and out of the infinite a hand is stretched forth to garland his dying brow with victory. —Dr. James I. Vance, in Tendency.

Heedless of the Crown. The Interpreter led them first into a room where was a man that could look no way but downwards, with a muck-rake in his hand: there stood also one over his head with a celestial crown in his hand, and proffered him that crown for his muckrake; but the man did neither look up nor regard, but raked to himself the stones, the small sticks, and the dust of the floor.

Then said Christiana: "I persuade myself that I know somewhat the meaning of this; for this is the figure of a man in this world; is it not, good Sir?"

"Thou hast said right," said he, "and his muckrake doth show his carnal mind. And, whereas thou seest him rather give heed to rake up straws and sticks, and the dust of the floor, than do what he says that calls him from above, with the celestial crown in his hand; it is to show that heaven is but as a fable to some, and that things here are counted the only things substantial. Now, whereas it was also showed thee, that the man could look no way but downwards, it is to let thee know that earthly things, when they are with power upon men's minds, quite carry their hearts away from God."—John Bunyan, in Pilgrim's Progress.

"A Good Old Age." A Boston man was visiting a town in Maine when, among the sights of the place, there was pointed out to him a native who had attained the age of one hundred and one.

"One hundred and one, eh!" exclaimed the Bostonian. "Well, that's quite a record. I suppose the townspeople are very proud of him?"

"I don' 'no'," was the response of the man who had given the information. "His record ain't much. He ain't done nothin' in this town except grow old, an' it's took him a long time to do that."

The Value of Life.

What is life worth? How measure it? I say
Life is what life can compass,—not mere length
Of days, but what is packed into each day,
Best use and largest increment of time and strength.

This is God's just appraisement,—how we make,
Or fail to make, life equal to the chance
Of good; what heaven's heritage we take,
What perfectness achieve, in view of circumstance.

To make life all it has in it to be,—
Just that, its measure, rounded full and fair,—
Reveals the statue hid in you and me,
And satisfies the Master's heart who placed it there.
—James Buckham.

For Discussion. 1. Paul the friend.

2. There are no crown-wearers in heaven who were not cross-bearers here below. —Spurgeon.

3. The satisfaction of a well-spent life.

4. Paul's hopefulness. See chapter XXII of Dr. Jefferson's The Character of Paul.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
PAUL'S GOOD COURSE

Beginning the Lesson. "I wish I could put before you Symond's graphic picture of the Olympian Games," a great preacher once said. "The time has come for the races. From all over Greece men are gathering to this great occasion. Merchants and peddlers are coming with their wares; princes with their retinues; women in their pomp and circumstance. Poets are coming with their poems; historians to read their histories, and dramatists to read their dramas (for there are no printed books); and politicians to ply their trade as well. All Greece is gathering. The hour has come. Men are ranged alongside one another. The signal is given; they start and run their eager race. And when it is over, the crown is given to one. And the greatest poet of Greece counts himself not unworthy to sing the praise of the man who wins the race in the Olympian Games."

Something such as this was the picture which was in Paul's mind when he wrote, "I have finished the course . . . Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

To whom was Paul writing? When and under what circumstances? Who was Timothy?

How to Run the Race.

He who to run life's race doth dare
With wrong at heart, though fleet he flees,
He may not win although he wear
The sandals of Hippomenes.

But he who keeps a stainless soul,
Albeit by pain and trial shod,
Will reach at last the priceless goal
That stands before the throne of God.—Clinton Scollard.

An Untroubled Memory. "There's ae man I envy every day. No the man who is rich and powerful,—na, na! It is the man whose life is clean and white frae his boyhood until this hour, who can turn over the pages and let every man look on," says one of Ian MacLaren's characters.

Such a man was Paul. While still a young man Robert Burns could only say,

"I backward cast mine e'e
On prospects drear,"

but Paul in his old age could review life and know that there was nothing to be concealed, that his work for Christ had been well done.

Dr. van Dyke has a little poem entitled "The Child in the Garden." It is "the garden of untroubled thought" which the poet wishes again to visit; the door is open, shall he enter? Just within the gate he sees a child who holds out his hands to him and then,

"Come in," he says, "and play awhile with me;
I am the little child you used to be."

We can never escape from our past. There will always be for us the child or the youth or the man we used to be. We may think we have forgotten, but unexpectedly "the child we used to be" will stand before us. Shall we be as unashamed of him as was Paul?

Life's Lesson Well Won. It is a beautiful picture his letter gives us of this great hero quietly awaiting his end, nobly conscious that his life had been well lived, his work well done, and calmly certain that he shall soon be with Christ, which is far better.

In the great drama Cardinal Richelieu is asked, "Art thou Richelieu?" and he replies, "Yesterday I was Richelieu, today I am a poor old man; tomorrow I know not what." In the great history Paul might have been asked, "Art thou Paul?" and he might have replied: "Yesterday I was Paul the active worker, today I am Paul the aged man awaiting his summons, tomorrow I shall have won my crown."

Tomorrow came. Paul was led by Roman soldiers out through the Ostian gate to the place of his execution. On the way, so tradition says, he saw Plautilla, the daughter of Flavius Sabinus, weeping bitterly, and to her he said, "Plautilla, weep not, and give me a veil, wherewith to blind my eyes, for I am going to see my Lord." She gave him the veil, and the procession moved on. They halted. The sword was uplifted and fell. Paul saw his Lord. For him to live was Christ—to die was gain.

The Lord will Save me unto his Heavenly Kingdom. One who has never seen a ship could know nothing of the Oceanic as she lay, a great hulk, along the dock at Liverpool. But when the last passenger and the last letter was on board, and the word rang from the bridge, "Loose the shore rope," and the vessel began to move away, and when she reached the sea, then could we see for what the Oceanic was made. She was not made to hug the shore; she was made for the mighty deep. There must be a loosing before she could be in her element. Paul knew that presently, beyond the land of shadow and darkness, that men call death, after he had been loosed from his moorings and had reached the great eternal sea of life, he would realize that for which he had been created.—Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.

We Have but One. A vessel was once far out on the ocean when a great storm arose; the waves dashed over the decks and the ship began to sink. The night was dark, but the sailors succeeded in launching their boats and rowing away before the vessel sank. They were in despair until they suddenly saw the lights of a distant ship, but how could they make the men on the ship see them in the darkness? They searched the boat and found an old lantern with an inch of candle in it. Then they tried to find a match: every man felt in all his pockets, but not a match was to be found. The captain told them to search again, and at last one precious match was found. The man who found it passed it to the steward, and he passed it to the mate, and the mate gave it to the captain, while all clustered about holding out their jackets to keep off the wind when the captain should light the lantern. It was a moment of great anxiety. What if the wind should blow out the match! The captain trembled and hardly dared to strike, but he must do it, and so at last amidst breathless excitement he carefully struck the match. It burned brightly and he held it to the candle, when to the great joy of the shipwrecked crew the candle gave out a glowing light. They waved the lantern till the ship saw the signal and came to them.

What was it that made that one match so precious? It was their only match, their one chance. It is that which gives value to our lives. We have but one, and if we spend it wrongly we cannot try again. Let us try to live right the only time.—Herbert W. Lathe, in The Junior Parish.

Sentence Sermons to Remember. I charge thee . . . war the good warfare.—Paul.

If you are to have a good tomorrow you must lay the right foundation today.

The tissues of the life to be
We weave with colors all our own,
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown.—Whittier.

Let him not boast who puts his armor on,
As he who puts it off, the battle won.—Longfellow.

CHRISTMAS LESSON

GOLDEN TEXT: For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2.11

LESSON Matthew 2.1-15 DEVOTIONAL READING Luke 2.8-14

REFERENCE MATERIAL Luke 2.1-20; John 3.16

(So familiar is our text that it is not necessary to print it here, nor to explain it.)

TOPIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS
THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Beginning the Lesson. There are those who say, "Christmas comes but once a year"; but this must be because they have no vision and no song. A holiday is merely a solar day; but a holy-day never ends.

There are many who do not forget. There are countless households where gifts are brought to the Yule Tree in devout remembrance of the Holy Child of Bethlehem; where in "a circle wide about the wee bit ingle, the sire wi' patriarchal grace takes down the old Bible" and reads the old, old story; where the vision lingers when the day is gone, and the celestial song goes on.

The monks at Erfurt were assembled on a Christmas day four hundred years ago, with one of their number missing. He sat alone, reading for the first time and clandestinely out of a forbidden Book, the story of the shepherds. From the chapel came the echoes of Advent Hymns: the monks were singing but he gave no heed: a sweeter song was ringing in his heart. He had caught a vision of a Child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger,—a vision that was never to leave him. Time passed. In silence and solitude, revolting against the perfunctory tasks of his monastic vow, he found an ever increasing peace in going up to Bethlehem. At length he was moved to write a cradle hymn:

"Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the heaven looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay."

The world without was in commotion; the Church was seething with corruption and discontent; at the call of the Holy Child the monk threw off his cowl and sallied forth to mingle in the fray. He nailed his memorable Protest to the castle door. The Vatican thundered at him; friends entreated him; fagots were lighted for him. He answered with a challenge, "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott!" "A strong fortress is our God!" They said he had the courage of a puissant knight; but it was simple faith kindled on that long ago Christmas by the vision of a Child in a manger whose two little hands were destined to shake the pillars of the world, on whose swaddling bands was written, "Wonderful, Counsellor, mighty God, everlasting Father and Prince of Peace." To that vision he was never disobedient: his unquenchable faith and indomitable courage were stimulated by a fond remembrance of "the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay."

Once, long ago, I saw the Grand Canyon of Arizona—the Seven Wonders of the World rolled into one! Do you think I could forget that? I took it with me when I came away and I have it with me now.

How much more shall the vision of Bethlehem stay by us! Let others forget: "henceforth it will delight us to remember": and on occasion we shall, like the shepherds, spread abroad the great thing that hath been made known unto us.

I wish you a perennial Christmas; a song that shall abide when the world's lights go out, and a vision that shall illuminate your pathway through all the future, making it brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.—Dr. David James Burrell in a Sermon.

Christmas Candles in the Heart and in the World. Candles in the heart are glowing for very joy, each in the measure of its greatness, like the wax candles which burn big and bright if they are big, little and bright if they are little, but all are flaming heavenward in rapture. To live but one day in good-will to all men is to anticipate and hasten that day when all men shall live in good-will.

Let the candles in the world shine clearly, for the earth would be dark without them, and bravely, for there were never so many shining as there are today. There

will yet be peace on earth, in spite of the pride and anger that lurk in each human heart. It will come. Selfishness and hatred delay it indeed for a while, and the spirit of war has been stealing upon the preoccupied souls of men, like a wild beast creeping toward the camp when the fire is low. It is a good time to light the Christmas candles, and to hold them high and steady. Do they seem to light but a little space? That is because we cannot see far enough yet. Have you ever camped upon a mountain summit, drenched all day long in fog, until at sunset a breeze tossed the folds of the cloud aside, as one draws aside the curtains of a cheerful room, and there in an instant were the golden valleys, the cities, and the far, shining sea? It had been a fair and sunlit world below you all the while. We know that our Christmas vision of a wide world of peace is only a glimpse of the reality that is to be. Before we can live in the daily joy of it we must make brighter the shadowy, treacherous places here where we are camping. We must light all the candles and keep them burning until it is full daylight everywhere.—Bliss Perry.

TOPIC FOR INTERMEDIATES AND SENIORS
THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

Beginning the Lesson. Christmas is the holiday for all people in all the world. Christmas celebrates the day when Jesus was born in Bethlehem; when herald angels appeared to the shepherds singing, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." Christmas is the day when in giving gifts to others we recall the gifts which the Wise Men from the East brought to the Infant Jesus. Who will tell the beautiful story which Matthew records?

Christmas Day is the Birthday of Christ. Let us be sure to think of this whenever we think of Christmas. There may be some boys and girls—I hope there are not many of them—who think of Santa Claus, and Christmas presents, and a good dinner, and of a good many other things, whenever they think of Christmas, but do not think of Christ.

The spirit of Christmas is the spirit of love. The spirit of love is the spirit of giving. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." And there is no other time in the year when so much giving is done as on Christmas. There are so many places where help is needed that we shall have no trouble in finding a place where we can give. We must buy Christmas seals to help the consumptives; we must give toward the support of the orphans; we must pity the poor Armenian children and keep them from starving to death; we must help to carry the gospel to the heathen, so that their children can learn about Jesus and be happy on Christmas.

We are told that two men started out on a long journey to find Christ. One of them stopped to help a starving family. He bought food, split wood, started the great oven fire, nursed and fed the sick, paid the family's debts and bought back the cow, horse and scythe with which the members of the family earned their living. Then his money was all gone, and it was too late for him to overtake his comrade, so he returned home. His friend would not stop to help any one. He reached Jerusalem, visited the sacred places, obtained earth from Calvary and water from the Jordan, and tried to reach the Holy Sepulcher, but he could not get near to it because of the crowd. Tired and disappointed, he returned home to learn that his companion had found Christ while helping the sick and needy.

Jesus says, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."—Condensed from Sermons to Juniors, by T. W. Dickert.

Christmas Bells. One beautiful June evening, years ago, I was walking along the banks of the Thames. All at once I was arrested by the pealing of the bells. Strangers stopped each other to inquire why the belfries had become vocal at that strange hour. We learned later that the bells were proclaiming the birth of an heir to the British throne. A prince had been born at White Lodge, just across the river! Well might the bells peal that night!

Well, too, may the bells peal on Christmas Eve! I like to think that, over the birth of *that* Babe, born in Bethlehem, and cradled in a manger, more bells have been rung than over all the princes since the world began. The Chinese cherish a legend concerning the great bell at Pekin. The Emperor, they say, sent for Kuan-Yiu, the caster of the bells, and described the bell that he desired. It was to be larger than any bell ever made, and its tone more beautiful. Its music was to be heard a hundred miles away. Great honors were to be heaped upon the bell-ringer if he succeeded; a cruel death was to follow his failure. Kuan-Yiu set to work; he mixed the costliest metals; he labored night and day; and at last he finished the

bell. He tested it, and was disappointed. He tried again, and was again mortified. He was at his wits' end. Then Ko-ai, his beautiful daughter, consulted an astrologer. The oracle assured her that, if the blood of a fair virgin mingled with the molten metals, the music would ravish the ears of every listener. Ko-ai returned to the foundry; and, when the glowing metal poured white-hot from the furnace, she plunged into the shining bath before her. The music of the great bell, the Easterners say, is the music of her sacrifice. It is only an Oriental myth; but it strangely helps me to interpret to my heart the solemn sweetness that I recognize in all these Christmas chimes.—F. W. Boreham, in Rubble and Roseleaves.

The Christmas Spirit. The holiday season had come. I went shopping for the sheer joy of being close to folks with smiles on their lips, happy secrets in their hearts, peace and good-will in their souls. I went forth trying to discover where this beautiful Spirit lives. I went forth seeking Christmas!

I heard a fretful voice say, "I'll certainly be glad when Christmas is over! I don't know what to get for anyone! Its awful! My list grows longer every year. Christmas is a burden!" Somehow the air was not so sweet and spicy and balmy as I had thought, so I moved on, shivering a bit. The Christmas Spirit did not live here.

I moved swiftly away. I had the strange illusion of a cherub weeping just above our heads—a little broken-hearted Christmas cherub.

I made my way to the toy department. Here little children rode ponies and gasped over marvelous fairy tales enacted before their very eyes. One little fellow was not so intent upon the entertainment as he was upon the counters full of toys. His face was troubled. "Do you see anything on there for ten cents?" he asked me, pointing to the table. "Not here," I replied, patting his curly head. "These are the more expensive mechanical toys. What sort of toy did you want?" "Something for mother," he replied doubtfully. I repressed a smile. Do even grown-ups consult others' tastes in giving, rather than their own? "Well, now," I said, "what do you think mother would like—something to eat, something to wear, something sweet to smell, something to look at, or—" "Something to look at," he replied promptly, " 'cause she takes in washings." "How would a calendar answer to remind her every day of you? Here are some with lovely scenes." "Gee! They're only five cents, too! That would leave me enough to get Fats one, too!" "'Fats'?" I inquired. "Ayeh, Fats. He's a cripple lives in the same house with us upstairs, never gets out like me, and all he can see from his window is Ma's clothes hangin' out. Gee! Won't I surprise him!" He doubled up with joy. "I love Christmas, don't you? And I love Ma and Fats, too," he said soberly. "I wish I could get them more. You think they'll like these 'ere?" he asked anxiously. "They'll just love them," I replied fervently. "Tell me where you live and I'll come on Christmas day just to see if they don't!" He went whistling down the aisle, his calendars under his arm.

A woman dressed in furs accosted me. "I beg your pardon, but as I was selecting some gifts I overheard your conversation with that dear little fellow. Can't you see his mother in that steaming kitchen and the invalid in his chair by the window? Would you mind letting me have his address? I didn't quite catch it. I want to play Santa Claus to them all on Christmas Eve. Don't you just love Christmas?"

I said to myself, "I know where Christmas dwells! Wherever anyone so loves that he gives, there is Christmas."—Mary Foot Lord, in The Christian Advocate.

Christmas Irritability. For weeks before Christmas we wake up every morning with an oppressive feeling that there is somebody to whom we ought to give something, and that we have forgotten that somebody's name! We run from store to store, we endure sharp retorts from overworked and rebellious shop-girls, we stay up until absurd hours to construct gifts and to put up decorations, all because Christmas is in the air and we have been given to understand that we ought to get very tired and cross about it.

Greed and vanity are within us all. The mother, led on by the little demon which lurks in advertisements and show windows, hints for a fur coat. The flapper of the family asserts her desire for a necklace. The boy mumbles that it's mighty inconvenient not to have a watch, and the small boy shrieks his orders for an electric engine. Father, the object toward whom all these remarks are plainly directed, finds himself growing more and more peevish under them.

It is most fitting that we should keep Christmas and keep it beautifully. It is most fitting that we should give gifts to those we love, and most of all, to those who have need. But the joy of Christmas depends upon the independence and personal desire with which it is approached. Christmas irritability is a denial of Christmas reality.—Condensed from The Christian Century.

REVIEW: FROM ATHENS TO ROME

GOLDEN TEXT: Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 5.1

DEVOTIONAL READING Psalm 91.1, 2, 9-16

REVIEW QUESTIONS UPON THE QUARTER'S LESSONS

For Young People and Adults. 1. What persecutions did Paul suffer on his Third Missionary Journey? 2. What were the outstanding events of this Quarter's Lessons? 3. Give Paul's sermon at Athens. 4. What characteristics of Paul have most impressed you in your study of his life? 5. What lessons from Paul have you gained? 6. What does the world owe to Paul? 7. By the close of the first century how far had the Gospel been proclaimed?

For Intermediates and Seniors. 1. What places did Paul visit on his Third Missionary Journey? 2. Where was Paul in danger from mobs? 3. Why did some Jews hate Paul? Why did some Gentiles hate him? Who loved him? 4. What happened to Paul on the way to Rome? 5. What did Paul himself say about his life? 6. When was John Mark a failure, and how do we know that he became a success? 7. What Books of the Bible did Paul write? 8. Where does Paul give his beautiful lesson about the greatness of love? 9. Repeat Paul's words about putting on the armor of God. 10. Repeat Paul's words in the verse which says he had fought a good fight.

QUESTIONS UPON THE BOOK OF THE ACTS

1. With what event does the Book begin? 2. With what does it close?
3. What city was the scene of the First seven chapters? 4. What may this period be called? 5. Who was the leader? 6. To what nation was Christianity limited?
7. Where were the scenes of chapters eight to twelve? 8. What might this period be called? 9. Who were the leaders? 10. To what Gentiles was the gospel preached?
11. In what countries did the events of the last sixteen chapters occur? 12. What may this period be called? 13. Who was the leader? 14. Who were his helpers? 15. To whom was the gospel preached?
16. Who wrote The Acts? 17. What do we know about him? 18. How did he know about the history which he records? 19. When was he with Paul? 20. When and where did he probably write The Acts?
21. What was the purpose of the Book? 22. What is its character? 23. What are its lessons for today?

QUESTIONS UPON THE PAULINE EPISTLES

1. How many Epistles in the New Testament were written by Paul? 2. What is their relation to The Acts? 3. Give them in the order as printed. 4. Give them in their order as written. 5. Which were written to churches? 6. Which written to individuals? 7. Which are called Pastoral Epistles, and why are they thus called? 8. From which of Paul's Epistles have we had lessons this year? 9. What truth did we gain from each? 10. Repeat Paul's words about love in First Corinthians.

WRITTEN WORK TO BE BROUGHT TO CLASS

1. The Cities of The Acts.
2. Paul's Fellow-Workers.
3. Paul's Enemies.
4. The Character of Paul.
5. Paul as a Missionary.
6. Paul as a Hero.

A REVIEW OF THE LESSONS OF THE LAST THREE QUARTERS

Each quotation below may be read aloud to the class, and when all who recognize the allusion signify this, the lesson to which it refers may be recalled by a few questions.

When the messenger of an unexpected blessing takes you by the hand and lifts you up and bids you walk, you may leap and run and sing for joy.—Dr. Henry van Dyke.

"There stood a man of Belgium saying, 'Come over and help us,' and immediately men of Briton arose to answer the call."

Let us so live that others may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

We are in danger of obeying man rather than God, of thinking more about what others will say than about how God will judge.

Self is the only prison that can ever bind the soul;
Love is the only angel who can bid the gates unroll.
—Dr. Henry van Dyke.

Japan has seen believers scattered abroad preaching the Word, and many with one accord giving heed to the things that were spoken.

All souls that struggle and aspire
All hearts of prayer by thee are lit,
And dim or clear, thy tongues of fire
On dusky tribes and twilight countries sit.
—Whittier.

Hitherto Christianity had imagined that men could only approach it through the gate of the temple, but at Antioch it discovered that the gate of the temple was only one of a multitude of avenues.—Dr. Matheson.

We are daily judging ourselves unworthy of divine grace in every act of refusal to accept and rely on it.—Dr. Abbott.

The world has often had its dreams of gods who had come down in the likeness of men, and even of a divine influence pervading all things; but no ethnic religion has told how men may come to God.—H. E. Fox.

"Why dost thou persecute me, Sons of Tarsus?
All night long these words were ringing in mine ears!
—Longfellow.

In the charity that thinketh no evil, in softness of spirit and grace of life, the saints are invulnerable to irritations which grievously exasperate men of an inferior spirit. —Dr. M. L. Watkinson.

"For her, three noisy hours of fierce acclaim
When shook the theater with craftsmen's cheers;
For him her worshipers maligned, a Name
That claims the clamors of the endless years."

Stretching out his hands to an unknown God, man heeds not the God in whom he lives and moves and has his being.—T. H. Green.

We have no right to "suppose that another has done a wrong thing and then state our supposition as a fact. A large proportion of the miserable gossip which is retailed by idle people in drawing-rooms and other places is started just as the story about Paul started.—Dr. J. R. Miller.

So, like the Saint at Corinth, well content
The craftsman's task we ply,
If, with the weaving, rise another tent
Eternal in the sky.
—John Elliott Bowman.

There have been men like those Jews in every age and every land who have delighted in stirring up others. There is no community free from such tormentors.

Men must feel after God in prayer, in aspiration, in meditation. They must "practise the presence of God," that in the persistent groping after him they may attain unto a sensitiveness of touch that perceives him everywhere.—Dr. J. H. Jowett.

Let us be quite certain that in our honest ambition to understand all mysteries and all knowledge we are not strangers to the experience of Love Divine.—Charles Sylvester Horne.

"The most of us seem to be always in quest
Of something that's novel and new."

"The talk of Lenine was overbearing and belligerent as he breathed out threatenings and slaughter on the road to Genoa."

Note: Through the Surplus Department of the World's Sunday School Association you can obtain the address of a missionary or teacher in the Philippines or Korea who will be glad to receive your copy of this book, if you have no further use for it. See page 363.